

**CLASS
STRUGGLES
IN THE USSR
THIRD PERIOD: 1930-
1941**

PART I: THE DOMINATED

**CHARLES
BETTELHEIM**

Class struggles in the USSR

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by

Charles Bettelheim

Translated by

J.N. Westwood



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Part One: The Dominated

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Preface to the French Edition

STALINISM was one, systematic, whole.

Analysis of the class struggles in the USSR during the 1930s confronts a situation which was particularly complicated, and rapidly changing. It has required an order of research which cannot be reproduced in the order of exposition. The results of our analysis of Stalinism and its realities will therefore be presented in two volumes: the first volume is devoted to the *dominated* (peasants, workers, the repression and mass terror which struck them, capital accumulation and its particular crises which made them its victims); the second volume deals with the *dominators*, their ideology and its changes in the 1930s, the manifestations of the new class and the historical conditions of its formation, the role of the Party and of the USSR's foreign policy.

This order of exposition will enhance clarity but at the same time will not prevent certain repetitions necessary for an understanding of the step-by-step evolution of the different elements and factors which make up, from top to bottom, Stalinism. The reader is asked to tolerate a little inconsistency in this regard.

— C.B.

Preface to the English Edition of the Third Volume (First Part) of Class Struggles in the USSR

THE appearance in English of the third volume of *Class Struggles in the USSR* comes ten years after its publication in French, ten years of economics, political and social upheavals of exceptional importance. These upheavals have directly touched those countries who claimed allegiance to socialism and have produced enduring effects on the international scene, one of which lies in viewing the current transformation as a testimony of the "failure of socialism".

On the alleged "failure of socialism"

The present work stands opposed to this thesis since it reveals that the USSR and the other countries who had declared that they had "built socialism" had not actually accomplished any of the radical social transformations which could have permitted them to break away from this specific form of state capitalism which I have described as "party capitalism". In fact, it is the latter which has failed.

This failure was brought about in the USSR through the aggravation of a general crisis born from the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production and particular forms re clothed by these contradictions under conditions of party capitalism. All the so-called socialist countries have entered into a similar process. These have developed according to specific modalities determined by their own history.

These countries had a number of similar characteristics; they were all for example, subject to the leadership of a single party which upheld its legitimacy from Marx's works. Among other objectives, this book seeks to throw light on the usurped character of this "legitimacy".

Against this background, it seems to me useful to present some other remarks.

On Marx's work

The analyses presented here bear upon the scientific content of the work inaugurated by Marx. This work is very much alive, open to newer fields of enquiry and therefore capable of being enriched through rectifications and criticisms inspired by experience and social practices. Indeed, it is precisely this capacity which has allowed it to remain current and relevant.

These two qualities have been confirmed by the movement of contemporary history: by the unfolding of the crisis of international capitalism which entails a deepening of social and economic polarisation, increase in unemployment and under-employment, rise in criminality, corruption and the use of drugs, escalation of armed conflicts, etc., on the one hand, while on the other hand, these qualities are confirmed by the ability of Marx's works to take into account the contradictions of several allegedly socialist models and their consequences.

The scientific character of most of Marx's work concerns above everything else, his analysis of the capitalist mode of production, its structures and contradictions and illuminating the laws governing its movement. Marx showed how the working of these laws led to a growing domination of the market order, the extension of the domination of capital and its globalisation, accumulation of riches at one end of the "society" (now extending to the entire planet), and poverty at the other end. Social struggles led victoriously by the exploited are the only means by which the working of these laws can be breached and the social relations upon which they are founded be smashed.

That Marx's scientific work was able to anticipate the subsequent transformations of capitalism and its major consequences must not lead in a paradoxical manner to the illusion

that – contrary to other sciences, Marx's scientific work will be infallible and capable of formulating "eternal truths" touching upon a future that is situated beyond the scope of all social practice.

Marx had on many occasions guarded against those who believed they could predict the future. He had recalled that "men make their own history" and that the outcome of these struggles is not "guaranteed" so long as these have not been overcome. Also, even if his writings are far from being exempt of prophetic declarations, (the range and scope of which are well worth exploring), he had himself, rightly criticised those who sought – according to his expression – "to boil the pots of the future" and pre-design the concrete forms of the transition to a "classless society" (see, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*). He knew that history had more imagination than us and that its "irony" could be bitter. Today, while the movement for the abolition of the existing order is going through an exceptional crisis, it is important as never before for those who claim to be fidel to Marx's work to show proof of their initiative and not condemn it to paralysis. For this purpose, they must in order to enrich it, treat this work – as is the case with all sciences – in a manner that does not hesitate to question its conclusions and its fundamentals when this is necessary since the only way of keeping a science alive is to take into account that which real history and practice never fail to teach us.

It is all the more necessary to bear these considerations in mind since ignoring them or occulting them has served to maintain the established "order" and has allowed adherents of the latter to speak of the "failure of Marxism". In this context, it is necessary to present a few other reflections by way of supporting what has been outlined above.

On the alleged "failure of marxism"

The possible points of departure of the reflections that follow are several. I have chosen to begin by questioning Bukharin's affirmation according to which Marx's work constituted a "block of steel". It seems to me that this point of departure is justified since this affirmation had implicitly sustained "Soviet Marxism" (to which it served as a "title of legitimacy") and can

foster several other forms of dogmatism. Now, a serious examination of Marx's work reveals that this is indeed questionable.

Comparing Marx's work to a "block of steel" is to already betray it through a denial of its historical insertion, its continuous development and its essential characteristics. Accepting this comparison provides the possibility of arbitrarily choosing any "quotation" taken from a complex work to unduly "justify" so-called "Marxist" analyses and conclusions but which are actually deprived of any sound basis.

Marx was highly conscious of the risk of distortion especially since this often occurred under his own eyes. He had denounced what he called "self-styled Marxism", declaring to Laffargue: "What is clear is that I myself am not a Marxist" (letter from Engels to Bernstein dated November 3, 1882).

Since these words were delivered, history has largely confirmed its bearer. It has shown that it is indispensable to recognise that Marx's work is rich, multiple and tirelessly creative; that – like all living reality – it includes contradictory aspects, and to arbitrarily abstract one of these at the expense of ignoring the context is tantamount to not respecting the integral nature of Marx's work.

It may also be recalled that concrete historical development and social struggles gave birth to not one but several Marxisms. Those who declared themselves the most "orthodox" were the most dogmatic; the worst deviations from the struggle for social emancipation were committed in their name. These Marxisms provided the weapons to fight the exploited and oppressed by calling upon them to respect an order which was none other than the established order even though it had been "smeared in red" as Lenin said of the Soviet state apparatus in 1921.

We cannot therefore speak of a failure of Marxism since the latter does not exist; what exists are several Marxisms which derive their origins from social struggles and from different aspects of Marx's work. Such a proposition might appear discouraging. In my view however it is not since it calls for the development of the only kind of Marxism that is defensible: critical Marxism.

For a critical Marxism

"Critical Marxism" is the rational kernel of Marx's work and

use of the works of those who remain 'fidel' to him. This does not however consist in simply repeating what he said but in retaining that which is in fact essential to forge ahead.

Remaining 'fidel' to Marx's work in this sense has several important implications: above all, it involves not looking for answers in his work which either do not exist or which are not at any rate to be found there. Marx was – as anybody else (to borrow an expression from Hegel) a 'child of his time'. Respecting this requirement is the only way of rendering Marx's work forever current and powerful by enriching it through lessons – made possible by and which cannot be bypassed – from practice and history.

This then implies a need to continuously extend the movement of Marx's work, this movement that enabled him to develop a radical critique of the existing order – the crimes of which he not only denounced but also showed – but they could only get worse – something which the experience of the past century tragically illustrates.

It also implies the task of retaining the *essence* of his thought, forms under which this order – most to be viewed as eternal – and the 'best' possible.

Further, it implies being alert to the new – the innovation and change – in order to extract lessons and identify what the old might have wrongly suggested. The emergence of newer social transformations – as a result of technological progress – is a source of thought in class struggles and popular movements in which Marx's teachings continue to have importance when he declared:

The emancipation of the workers themselves – this is already concerned any kind of ideal – derives from a text – imposed on a party which without having read as he knew the evolution.

Finally, it implies an effort to keep alive the aspects of Marx's thought to which we still need to refer – it is as something that 'we welcome, see, listen to the first book of the *Capital* 1867'.

A critical analysis of this kind – that is, a power to all – proper – method – which can only be constructive and consequently serve the existing order. Remaining as an aim of the system – for a text is the concept of a system by remaining open to the practice of free debate that is indispensable to the conquest of humanity.

The failure of pseudo-socialisms and dogmatic Marxisms that were linked to them heralds the beginning of a period during which the revolutionary character of critical Marxism can clearly develop and manifest itself. Among the scientific tasks that need to be urgently addressed include a balance sheet of pseudo socialisms and their ideologies, an exercise in critical reflection having a bearing upon the different Marxisms in a manner that retains their positive lessons and rejects the rest, analysis of the forms of domination of capitalist apparatuses and the modalities of their transformation into private capitalists and the new forms assumed by the class struggle while the domination of capital considered globally, is tending towards greater concentration to an extent that has no precedent hitherto.

The present work which attempts to show what "socialism" and Soviet "Marxism" had been can perhaps be considered as the beginning of a necessary renewal of critical and revolutionary Marxism.

Charles Bettelheim

Paris, June 1993

Translated by Ramnath Narayanswamy Bangalore, July 1993

Key to abbreviations and Russian words used in the text

Arto.	Traditional form of cooperative
CC	Central Committee of CPSU (B)
Shiraga	Research establishment of NKVD staffed by detainees
CPSU (B)	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)
Gosplan	State Planning Commission
GPK	State Political Administration (Security Service)
Guag	Labor camp administration
Khozraschyt	Application of proper accounting procedures
Kolkhozsentr	Central organization for managing the USSR's collective farms
Kolkhoz	Collective farm
Kolkhoznik	Collective farm peasant
Kontraktsiyya	Delivery contract system between state collecting organizations and the peasants or kolkhozes
Krai	Region
Mir	Traditional peasant commune
MTS	Machine and Tractor Station
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKVD	Commissioner of the Interior
OGPU	Successor organization of GPK with its security functions taken over by the NKVD
Orgnabor	Organized recruitment
Otruda	Local organizations of Labor Commissariat
Raion	District
RKA	Commission for settling labor disputes
Serednyak	Middle average peasant
Skhod	Traditional peasant assembly
Sovkhoz	State farm
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
Traktorsentr	Central organization for distributing and managing the tractor stock
Trudoden'	Accounting unit used on collective farms for calculating payments to peasants literally "labor-day" (plural <i>trudodni</i>)
VSNAKh	Supreme Economic Council
Zek	Detainee (from Russian abbreviation, ZK for prisoner plural <i>zeki</i>)

Key to abbreviations used in bibliographical notes

<i>EG</i>	<i>Ekonomicheskaya gazeta</i>
<i>Ist SSSR</i>	<i>Istoriya SSSR</i>
<i>KP</i>	<i>Komsomol'skaya pravda</i>
<i>KPSS (1953)</i>	<i>KPSS v resolutsiyakh i resheniyakh</i> (1953 edition)
<i>KSAh</i>	<i>Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaystva</i> (Moscow 1953)
<i>Lit Gaz</i>	<i>Literaturnaya gazeta</i>
<i>NKh. 1961g</i>	<i>Narodnoye khozyaystvo v 1961g</i> (year may vary)
<i>PS</i>	<i>Partnoye stroitel'stvo</i>
<i>Tsgar</i>	Central state archives of the October Revolution
<i>VI</i>	<i>Voprosy istorii</i>
<i>Zⁱ</i>	<i>Za industrializatsiyu</i>

Directions for use

VOLUMES 3 and 4 of *Class Struggles in the USSR* constitute the provisional terminus of a route for which volumes 1 and 2 were important stages. This route, which here I can not discuss from a personal aspect, led me to results and reevaluations which raise questions about some of the suggestions put forward in the first two volumes of this study. In particular, I have felt it necessary to modify my earlier characterization of the October Revolution and its aftermath. The present text is largely devoted to this new characterization.

Before embarking on new formulations I should add that these are not the result simply of "research" (devoted in this case to Russia) and of a secluded contemplation. They have been impressed upon me not only by analysis of what has happened in the USSR but also by many recent events, especially those involving China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Poland. These events exemplify the attraction exerted by a process of transformation, one which tends to gradually break with the strands of a totalitarian system in which a single party claims the right to manage state and society and to reserve freedom of speech to itself alone. Moreover, perusal of books recently published about the Russian Revolution, and a return to the analysis of Soviet history in the 1930s, have made clearer the gap separating the speeches and promises of October from revolutionary and postrevolutionary reality.¹ Consideration of

this gap and revealing the reasons for it was, right from the start, one of the aims of this study. I believe that I am now closer to this objective than I was when I prepared the first volume.

I would add that discussions I have had with those kind enough to read parts of the preliminary drafts of Volumes 1 and 2 of this study¹ whether they agreed with me or not, have given me considerable help in evaluating, in a way I might otherwise not have done, the significance and the distinctive features of the October Revolution.

As is known, the October insurrection interrupted a plural revolutionary process which began in February 1917 with the fall of tsarism and the formation of a provisional government.

A first component of this process was a peasant revolutionary movement of enormous strength, which in the countryside completely shook the established order. In effect, the peasant revolution led to the sharing out progressively of the land of the big landowners. This began before October and continued afterward.

A second component was that which inspired the hopes of social emancipation entertained by certain parts of the working class and intellectuals. These hopes took concrete form in the development of the activity of the soviets, in the spread of factory committees and the very growth of their role. They were also manifested by the movement in favour of democratic freedoms, installation of a representative system and of a state founded on law. The struggle for the convening of a Constituent Assembly formed part of this movement.

A third component finally is that which a certain version of the Marxist 'vulgate' sometimes tries to designate as the 'democratic and anti-imperialist revolution' and sometimes as the 'socialist revolution' but whose historical significance cannot be conveyed by these terms. The latter refers to a certain revolutionary mythology to the conflict between the old (1789) and the new (1917) which is in the process of being born. This third component of the revolutionary process corresponds to the revolt of part of the people and of the Russian intelligentsia who do not wish to see their country continuing to serve as an instrument for imperialist greed, struggling for a new share-out of the world, and who also reject the subordinate place of Russia on the world economic map.

political arena. The leaders of this conspiracy declared themselves ready to govern the country through the soviets, and they allotted an essential role to the state's takeover of the means of production in order to develop rapidly the productive forces.

On the political level the revolutionary process which began in February 1917 was characterized by the multiplication throughout the country of committees or soviets composed of workers, peasants and soldiers, or of their delegates. Between February and October 1917 the real political power, insofar as it still existed, was divided into two (hence the expression "dual leadership" used to describe the situation of that time, which is the situation of revolutionary crisis). These two powers (the provisional government on the one hand, the soviets on the other) were extremely weak and their authority quickly reduced. It did not extend throughout the entire country.

The February Revolution therefore marked the start of a series of complex transformations which were accompanied by a rapid popular mobilization, a relative strengthening of the authority of the soviets, and the development of the influence of the Bolsheviks over a section of the masses, whose expectations for an immediate peace and certain urgent demands (such as the appropriation of land by the peasants) were expressed.

The confusion which largely gave rise to the revolutionary process which developed after February 1917, when the soviets and the "entanglement of bourgeois-democratic and proletarian revolutions" is for the circumstances existing at the time. It conveys a false representation of a reality which is in fact more complex and, in order to maintain truth, it is necessary to take into consideration the great diversity in the participating movements. Today, I feel this representation has seriously hampered an understanding of what was actually moving in the revolutionary process that was in full bloom after February 1917, a process moreover whose political development can only be guessed at, since it was brutally interrupted by the Bolshevik seizure of power. This seizure of power marks the beginning of the end of the post-revolutionary process which was born in February 1917 and whose last sparks were the Kronstadt in March 1921. The soviets were then transformed into nothing and executive organs of government, and Bolshevik

Party decisions, whilst the participation of the masses was progressively broken in thousands of theatres of activity. Instead, there was substituted just one such theatre that of the Party (soon to be the sole party) which claimed to incarnate the people and to make history. The party presented itself as though it had made the revolution and, alone, knew how to make it work. And so it soon banned as subversive all discourse apart from its own. Any dissenting opinion was held to be "counter-revolutionary" ("whoever is not with us is against us", as it was said).

October made it possible for a managerial team, benefiting from the sympathy of part of the urban masses, to place itself at the head of an organized movement and of new organs of power in order to try to guide the country along a predetermined track, in this way a 'revolution from above' was initiated in which a decisive role was played by the directing organs of the Bolshevik Party.

The banning of other parties like the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) and the Menshevik Party (which included many workers) the subordination of the trade unions to the Bolshevik Party and the way the latter maintained all progressively carried the door to any possibility of organized expression on the part of workers, peasants or intellectual workers.

Thus the power installed in October 1917 by the Bolsheviks, power which proclaimed itself the dictatorship of the proletariat in reality was a dictatorship in the name of the proletariat and it was finally exercised over the workers and itself. Lenin himself recognized this fact in many ways. Thus in 1919 he declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Soviet Russia corresponded to a government for the working people and not a government by the working people. He even added that this power was not a dictatorship of the proletariat.⁶ Although Lenin refrained from drawing such a conclusion, such phrases meant that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is only a fiction. The latter represents in an inverted form the real relationships which are those of a dictatorship exercised over the proletariat.

Such an inverted presentation of the real relationships of enormous significance. On the one hand it constituted the founding myth of Soviet Russia, presented as the country

the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and of the "Great October Socialist Revolution." On the other hand it signified the subjection of the Bolshevik Party to an alienated ideology which had the Party whatever its real relationship with the actual proletariat, affirming that it was the 'vanguard' of the latter. In this way the Bolshevik Party claimed a proletarian legitimacy which in some way was consubstantial. This gave it a disposition from giving an account of itself to the working class, which was judged 'less advanced' than itself. Certainly the Party had to pay attention to what the workers were thinking, but with the aim of educating and guiding them and, if necessary, of punishing those who did not recognize its authority. Thus "workers' state power could be rigorously used against that class. As Lenin told L.D. Brown: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised not only over the bourgeoisie but also over the politically unaware or stubborn part of the proletariat and its partner the reformers. The reformers are shot."⁷

"Proletarian legitimacy" allowed the ruling power to co-opt with a true Soviet legitimacy, while claiming the latter for itself whenever it considered it useful to do so. This Soviet legitimacy was, moreover, only an accessory: it was not a "founding legitimacy," as is remarkably emphasized in our analysis of Marc Ferro: the Bolshevik Party began at the time of the October insurrection by depositing its power in the soviets and their Supreme Congress at the very moment when the Bolsheviks, were supposed to have symbolically installed Soviet power.⁸ Simultaneously, in its discourse the Bolshevik Party made October appear as the true image of what it itself regarded as a "socialist revolution."

But if one analyzes the political and social consequences whose development has been encouraged by this representation of the revolution, one concludes that the October insurrection brought to power a radicalized fraction of the intelligentsia, was supported by part of the working class, and claimed to speak in the name of the proletariat, that which has entered history under the banner of socialist revolution is essentially a "capitalist revolution" leading in the end to an expropriation of the direct producers.

In Volumes 1 and 2 of this study I had yet to arrive at this conclusion. I believed then that it was only progressively through a series of "slides" and "ruptures," that the Soviet Union put itself locked into what I called "state capitalism," and that those "slides" and "ruptures" were a result above all of "historical circumstances" of the need to "face up to difficulties which the Bolshevik Party could not have overcome in any different way. Today I think—following the repetition of the same type of development in all those countries in which a directing party has taken Bolshevism as a guide for its action—that one must ascribe a decisive historical role to certain concepts of Bolshevism." That is, the "historical mission of the proletariat" and its party a party functioning as the necessary source of theoretical and political truth, a socialism which—according to Lenin—is only "State monopoly capitalism which is made to serve the interests of the whole people."

Admittedly, the moulding of Bolshevik ideology a complex and contradictory—and one could quote other texts in opposition to those which assign to the revolution the goal of a "generalized state wage-earning class"—but in the final analysis what remains is the assimilation of socialism to state capitalism.

From October 1917 such concepts helped to create an economic and social transformation toward a "capitalist revolution." However up to 1929 this "capitalist revolution" endeavored to leave a place for the peasant revolution, which seemed to promise an avenue for cooperatives. This prospect was abandoned at the end of the 1920s when new social and political conflicts were unleashed leading to a "second revolution," the "Stalinist revolution" which pushed to extremes the expansion of exportive relationships.

The concept of "capitalist revolution" formulated here should be distinguished from the traditional concept of "bourgeois revolution." It is used to characterize the process begun in October and relaunches and overtaken in 1929 not simply in regard to the social forces which played a directing role in it but taking into account the social relationships which this revolution consolidated and helped in spite of (or with the help) of phrases about socialist revolution.

The capitalist revolution which developed in Russia tended to eliminate the pre-capitalist forms of production, in particular small scale commercial production. But in 1924 most of the Bolshevik leaders envisaged a progressive and planned elimination of these types of production. The 'Leftist' revolution abandoned this prospect. Relying exclusively on one part of Bolshevism's complex and contradictory concepts, it strove for the development of the most unlimited forms of capitalist production, for the most radical separation of the direct producers from their means of production, and for the destruction of the forms of communalism and organization which would allow these producers to resist exploitation.

In this way through a complex and bruising process the October revolution cleared the way for two successive revolutions: one which was orientated towards a state capitalism which had a place for the peasantry, and then one which after 1929 laid the foundations (in the name of socialism and under the direction of the Bolshevik Party) of an extreme form of capitalism. Finally, this second revolution, marked by the Stalinist leadership, imposed on the Russian people capitalist type relationships which enabled an exceptionally high rate of accumulation to be achieved over a certain period at the cost of unprecedented oppression.

Neither the October Revolution nor the 'Leftist' revolution attacked capitalist exploitation: what they did was to create the specific political forms of domination by means of a transformation of the *juridical* forms under which this capitalist exploitation operated. After October, real power was more and more exercised by the party leadership and apparatus. The centralizations which in course of time were imposed on the Party as much for objective reasons as for the leadership's desire, resulted in the Party apparatus becoming increasingly authoritarian in relation to its membership: it tended towards total recruitment and the purging of those who did not sufficiently submit to it. In this way the 'new type' Party really took shape during the 1930s.

For the Party leadership, the contradictions which put in opposition 'to the workers, peasants, or cadres could be resolved positively' only by the strengthening of its authority. It ex-

was the emancipation of the working class, represented for all the consolidation of its power. It concluded that only a highly centralized economic and industrial organization would permit a sufficiently high growth of production and of labor productivity. It believed, at least in 1917 and at the beginning of the 1920s, that the workers would thereby, in the end, win the free time which they needed in order to participate actively in the management of public affairs — a consideration which disappeared during the 1930s.

This review of the analysis of the October Revolution and its aftermath leads to recognition of the fact that the socialist aspect of this revolution is a matter of aspirations and faith or the level of image and ideology.

Nevertheless, the "socialist" aspect of October has had, and still has, considerable historical effect. The myth of the USSR as "owners of socialism" tends to survive in our own days in spite of the fact that that country has a particularly radical separation and extension of a wage-earning class and a rigorous subordination of production to the limitations of capital accumulation and of surplus value. All this corresponds to an extreme form of capitalism and leads to a policy which is militaristic and expansionist.

If this is far from being universally recognized, it is not only because of the strength of a foundational myth but also because of complex and contradictory causes. Thus a large number of people desire socialism to be realized somewhere or other and therefore invest in the USSR an imaginary socialism — a screen for adherents of western capitalism and advocates of social change. The identification of the USSR with socialism is highly convenient because it suggests that any attempt at a radical social emancipation would lead inevitably to the dictatorship of a single party and to an arbitrary and despotic repressive regime which would preserve the privileges of especially hidebound and arrogant minority. However great the effect of the foundational myth of October, the ignorance of Soviet reality and simple bad faith have served to conceal the socialist character of the USSR. It is a so very attractive and seductive and purely descriptive representation of a society.

For those who accept such a representation, socialist development can only take place in accordance with a narrow and

the model of which is England and America. The Marxist "vulgate" moreover holds this view even though it lets us see the culmination of this development was represented by Germany and the so-called "directed capitalism" which that country experienced at the end of World War I. Concrete observation and historical analysis tend to produce a different view which recognizes that there exist only *specific ways of development* both of production relationships and of productive forces under capitalism and that there is not solely an Anglo-American way of capitalist development but also other ways which are French, Japanese, Russian and so on.

The "decomposition" of the "old social order" was especially spectacular in Russia from 1918 to 1920, and then from 1918 to 1931 individuals who until then held a dominant place in the production and reproduction process or on the political scene were effectively eliminated in wholesale fashion. But the transformations which resulted from this only upset the social relationships of domination and exploitation without making them disappear. It has been obscured by the elimination of the old holders of political and economic power and by the emplacement of a strongly centralized executive power whose representatives spoke a radical language at the same time as the illusion that there had been a total break with the past and that an entirely new social order was being built. The October revolution was presented in the guise of a socialist revolution whereas what it did was open the way for a capitalist revolution of a specific type. October is therefore the beginning of what one might call the Great Transition of the 20th century.

Notes

Among recent works I would particularly mention the important studies by Marc Ferro: *The Russian Revolution of February 1917* (London 1972), *October 1917* (London 1978), especially pp. 296-300. *Des Soviets et communistes: bureau rouge* (Paris 1980), especially pp. 19-20, 140-141, 140-141, 224-1. *La révolution soviétique de 1917* (1980). I would also mention Marc A. Milner's *Comprendre la Révolution Russe* (Paris 1980), especially pp. 10-11 and *Histoire sociale et économique de la révolution soviétique* (Paris 1980). On a different plane in Russian books by Bernard Charvát should be mentioned *La capitale soviétique* (Paris 1980) as well as *Claude Lefort et L'Union soviétique* (Paris 1981).

2. Making the effort to measure this gap, one has to take seriously Marx's declaration in the foreword of his *Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts*: "One does not evaluate a revolutionary epoch according to its own idea of itself."
3. I have in this way had the benefit of very useful comments by Renee Collier, Bernard Chevance, Yves Duroux, Signid Groeskopf, K.S. Karol, Alain Lipietz, Thierry Paquot, Rossana Rossanda, Jacques Sapir, Patrick Tisser, Paulette Vanhecke, Eric Vigne, Francois Wahl, as well as many others too numerous to mention, including the participants in my seminars at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en sciences sociales.
4. For these terms, see the first volume of this study.
5. This description follows that of Claude Lefort in 'La question de la Révolution' (see *L'Invention démocratique*, p. 189).
6. On this point, see volume 1 of this study (p. 98) and Lenin's *Collected Works* (London, 1965) Vol 29, p. 183 and Vol 32, pp. 20-21, 24 and 48.
7. See L.O. Froissard, 'Mon journal de voyage en Russie' in *L'Internationale*, October 2 1921, quoted in F. Kupferman *Au pays des Soviets* (Paris, 1979), pp. 40-41.
8. See Mario Ferro, *Des Soviets*, p. 186ff.
9. Here it has to be admitted that, contrary to what I thought in 1974, these conceptions have had considerable historical consequences.
10. Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, (Moscow, 1964), p. 362.
11. Vols. 1 and 2 of this study began to move away from this illusion, but were still affected by it.
12. These two volumes, devoted to the third period (1930-41) conclude our enquiry into the class struggles in the USSR. After 1941, in effect, the foundations of the Stalinist system were firmly laid, in the USSR today they are still in the process of deterioration. The Khrushchev period deserves to be treated as a specific phenomenon and should not be reduced to a mere episode or digression.

PART 1

The peasantry expropriated

For most of the 1920s Soviet agriculture remained mainly 'private'. In 1927 'individual peasant farms' provided 82.4 percent of the marketed grain production, the sovkhozes (state farms) 5.7 percent, and the kolkhozes (collective farms) 1.9 percent. In 1928 these two latter types of farm had less than three percent of the sown land, and were worked by a still smaller proportion of the active population.¹ The concept, then, dominant of the NEP had led the Party and state to avoid giving real help to peasants wishing to adopt spontaneously the path of collective agriculture.²

Toward the end of the 1920s the poor supply of industrial products to the countryside tended to reduce the amount of agricultural produce on offer. The authorities reacted with a series of measures which led to the 'general crisis of the NEP'.³

The Party leadership responded to the difficulties that then arose by conducting a frontal attack against the peasantry. The continuation of this attack resulted, during several years, in a radical upheaval of social relationships in the countryside and swept to quite new class relationships that were historically unprecedented and in no way corresponded to what the Party leaders had forecast at least overtly at the end of the 1920s.

Notes

1. See *Nerodovolstvo* p. 27 and p. 118. See also Vol. 2 of this work p. 85.

2. See Vol. 2 of the present work, pp. 105ff.

3. See above pp. 101-128 and pp. 460-478.

"The socialist transformation of agriculture" and the class struggles

TO grasp the significance of what is officially termed the "socialist transformation of agriculture" it is first necessary to recall briefly some essential aspects of the agrarian structures toward the end of the 1920s and the way in which these structures tended to develop.

The existing social relationships toward the end of the NEP in Soviet agriculture resulted from the peasant revolution of 1917, the policies followed afterward by the authorities, and the repetition of peasant practices which by and large were communal and stemmed from the traditions of the *mir* and of the *skhod*.¹

The agriculture that had been "socialized" played only a minimal role, supplying only 3.3 percent of agricultural production.² Private agriculture therefore played a quite dominant role. Within the latter, it may be noted that the middle peasants were dominant in the countryside: they accounted for more than two-thirds of the peasantry. Together with the poor peasants, they provided eight times more grain for the market than the rich peasants.³ Moreover, the proportion of middle peasants tended to increase especially through the entry into this category of part of the old poor peasantry.⁴ The situation of the middle peasantry, and part of the poor peasantry, was also strengthened by the development of traditional mutual aid practices, and by voluntary association in tens of thousands of simple production cooperatives.⁵ In these ways the

economic wealth of these peasant capitalists tended to grow up to a certain point the same thing happened with the political weight transmitted through the *skhod*, which in fact had resumed the role and procedures of the former *skhod*.¹⁰

In fact, contrary to the official propaganda of the late 1920s, whose most important themes are repeated by present-day Soviet propaganda, it was not at all a question of a rise in power of the rich peasants, or the coming to a head of a threat that these *kulaks* could have brought to bear simultaneously on middle and poor peasants and on food supply for the towns. Nor was it a question of a genuine spontaneous aggravation of the social contradictions inside the village — of course these contradictions existed during NEP, but the possibility was not there, and the facts demonstrate this, that these contradictions could have manifested themselves in a strengthening of the situation of the great majority of the peasants and in their voluntary entry into the cooperative system. It could be added that this has generally been overlooked because there has been confusion between the division of the peasantry according to external economic criteria and its division into classes which depend on production and labor relationships.

These two ideas should be borne in mind when seeking to recover the social forces which impelled collectivization, and when seeking reasons for collectivization ending in the destruction of what had been gained from the peasant revolution, in the exploitation of the peasantry and an upsurge of new exploitative relationships. In fact, contrary to the official picture, collectivization did not result from the struggles by poor and middle peasants, more and more exploited and oppressed by the *kulaks*. It resulted from the intervention of social forces external to the village which exacerbated and made use of the internal contradictions within the village. These social forces were those of the Party which had become all powerful in the state. They led to a specific capitalist transformation of the Soviet countryside (when the latter was in no way developing into a peasant capitalism). The triumph of this rural capitalist revolution required that the peasants should be returned in servitude and their resistance shattered.

It is here that there lies the true meaning of the vicissitudes of collectivization. Without understanding this, one might believe that these tragic events resulted from an insane venture that brought long-term ruin to Soviet agriculture and which in an absurd way launched the USSR into a chain of events full of noise and fury.⁶

To trace accurately the history of these events we must go back to 1928-29.⁷

I. The years 1928-29

In consequence of the policies adopted for agricultural prices and for deliveries of industrial products to the peasants (particularly of products which they needed to develop their production) 1927 ended in a fiasco over the procurement of cereals by the state (and also by the official cooperatives). The leadership of the Party decided at the beginning of 1928 to take urgent measures, which were regarded as the only measures that were practicable.⁸ In accordance with these measures, the peasants had to deliver to the state the grain which they held and for this they received a very low official price. If the peasants responded with a refusal, the authorities had recourse to 'exceptional measures,'⁹ which, in particular, allowed them to act under Article 107 of the Penal Code of the KSSS-R, that is, they could seize the assets of the peasant and confiscate them. These confiscations were carried out with the help of numerous officials and of worker brigades sent from the towns. In principle these measures of coercion were only applied to the kulaks, but in fact they were applied to all peasants, mainly to middle peasants who held the most grain. These measures were carried out brutally, especially after the spring of 1928, when famine began to be seriously felt. From that time the poor peasants, who more or less had opposed the exceptional measures during the winter months, became hostile to such an extent that at the end of the spring almost all the peasants were clearly against the policy adopted for the villages. In the middle of June, 1928, M. I. Furskian wrote in a letter addressed to the Central Committee: 'The village, apart from a small section of the poor peasantry, is against us.'¹⁰

This event was also felt in the towns. The Soviet Union at the time experienced the most serious social and political crisis since the Kronstadt uprising. In July the Central Committee decided to annul the 'exceptional measures,' which it emphasized were 'temporary,' and condemned those applications of them which had given rise to 'violation of revolutionary legality,' to illegal searches and to administrative arbitrariness etc.¹²

Nevertheless, some months later, because of the 'insufficiency' of the tax-in-kind, exceptional measures were again taken with the application of coercion against the peasantry. Delivery quotas were imposed on the peasants. If they did not fulfil these the authorities levied heavy fines, which after even took the form of expropriation and expulsion from the village. In this way from the winter of 1928-29 there was a partial 'dekulakization' like the dekulakization which would follow. This affected not only the rich peasants but also the middle peasants, and these measures in effect implied the abandonment of NEP. They were felt to be an attack on the peasantry, and shattered the sympathetic feelings which the village still retained for the government.

(II. The reintroduction of compulsory deliveries and the first wave of collectivization (1929-30)

(a) The frontal attack against the peasantry after the harvest of 1929

While fixing quite ambitious but apparently realizable targets for the development of kolkhozes and sovkhoses the Seventeenth Party Conference (April 23-29, 1929) made concessions to the poor and middle peasants, who were still regarded as the dominant people in the countryside. The Conference reiterated its condemnation of 'violations of socialist legality'.¹³

However just before the summer 1929 harvest, despite all the previous assurances, the government fixed compulsory deliveries similar to those of 'war communism' (local deliveries)

themselves evaluated the grain surpluses of the village and
 the delivery norms of each producer. It was a question
 of arranging the peasants to fulfil the grain delivery plans
 given the level at which the majority of these norms were
 fixed. This meant the continuation from the majority of the
 peasants of the results of their work, in other words a better
 share of the peasantry. Special commissions (headed by the
 chairman of the delivery plans - the village Soviets in actual
 fact controlled by the Party) were given the right to inflict
 heavy fines and to ban the appointment of new village
 governors. In order to reduce the supplementary burden that
 these levies imposed on them, the poor peasants managed
 to get the quotas increased for the rich and better-off peasants.
 These quotas reached such levels that they could not be paid.
 Peasants taxed in this way had not only to sell their livestock
 and their equipment but also their corn, wheat, flour, etc.
 and even residential and farm buildings in order to purchase
 a crop of grain from the market the grain that they had to deliver to
 the state. Some peasants were driven to such a point that they
 reduced their sowings and liquidated part of their animal or
 mechanical assets. In 1929 alone, the number of horses de-
 stroyed by 2.5 million and of cows by 7.6 million. The expro-
 priation of part of the peasantry required an enormous mobiliza-
 tion of the Party and state apparatus, resources, methods
 and political methods, and at the same time it caused a rift in the
 Party in 1929 of the town area and called for the withdrawal of
 those who were to get hold of the largest possible quantity of grain and
 products and to weaken the peasantry. It was not that they
 over the desire to develop socialism, it was simply that they
 for the level of agricultural production. The Party
 the new exploitative urban class had more weight than the
 considerations of the alliance with the peasantry.

D) The escalating collectivization 'drive' in the fall of 1929 and January 1930

At the top level of the Party apparatus during the winter
 of 1929 there was a strong feeling of the necessity of those
 who had decided to put an end to the NEP and to

results of the peasant revolution by instituting new agrarian structures which would permit the maximum exploitation of the rural society.

Although the Sixteenth Party Conference had adopted the 'optimal' version of the Five-Year Plan and targets for collectivization which seemed to be realizable seven months later things took quite a different turn. What happened was that at the Plenum which met November 10-17, the annual plan for 1929-30 was adopted.¹⁵ The targets of this plan were very high and no longer corresponded at all with those of the Five-Year Plan adopted several months earlier. Stalin had declared that the peasants were joining the kolkhozes as entire villages and even entire districts,¹⁶ and a new upward revision of the collectivization targets was made in accordance with the new plan for the countryside for spring 1930 (this plan was ratified December 23, 1929). This was not the end of the series of decisions of this nature, for a decision of the Central Committee of January 5, 1930 fixed collectivization targets which were even higher. The table below shows the upward movement of targets which was to turn upside down the agrarian structures of the USSR.

*Agricultural "socialization" targets
(socialized sown areas in millions of hectares)*

	1933 targets of the April 1929 resolu- tion ¹⁷	1930 targets		
		Annual Plan	Decree of December 23, 1929 ¹⁸	Resolution of January 5 1930 ¹⁹
Kolkhozes and sovkhozes	26	18.3	33.7	30 minimum (by spring 1930)
of which kolkhozes		15.0	30.0	

It may be noted that in December 1929 the targets for 1933 had already been exceeded by the targets for 1930 and that the forecasts of "collectivization" doubled between November and December 1929. The resolution of January 1930 established 'as a task the collectivization of the entire

majority of peasant households during the five-year period. Moreover it provided that by the fall of 1930 or, at the latest, spring 1931, complete (*splashnaya*) collectivization would be largely achieved in the main grain regions of the lower and middle Volga and in the North Caucasus and, one year later, in the other grain regions.¹⁰

The resolution of January 5, 1930 established that in principle the *arte* would be the main form of collectivization¹¹ and it favored the formation of large *kolkhozes*.

Fixing targets in such precise figures for collectivization contradicted the principle of voluntary acceptance of the *kolkhoz* by the peasants. The contradiction became especially obvious when the Central Committee unblushingly at the same time warned Party organizations against any attempt to influence the collectivization movement by means of decrees from above.¹²

As things turned out the forced collectivization campaign was speeded up by repressive measures adopted under pretext of liquidating the *kulaks* as a class¹³ and by the application of various administrative measures.

(c) "Administrative measures" preparing and accompanying "collectivization from above"

From summer 1929 various administrative measures were taken having the effect of putting pressure on the peasantry. This pressure aimed not only to increase the quantity of grain processed by the state but served also to induce the peasants to enter the *kolkhozes* and to accept that the latter would be of the size desired by the authorities.

As early as June 27, 1929 the Central Committee instructed the administration of the cooperatives (purchase sales etc.) etc., to adapt itself to the demands of collectivization, particularly by encouraging the establishment of big *kolkhozes* and even of giant *kolkhozes*.¹⁴ In practice this meant the destruction of the small and medium *kolkhozes* that the peasants had started and themselves directed¹⁵ and the imposition on the peasantry of the formation of large-scale *kolkhozes* to which it was usually hostile¹⁶ because it could not control the r

management, this implied that the peasants were completely separated from their means of production.

In August 1929 the CC issued directives for the development of the system of contracts (*kontraktatsyza*). This system meant the supply of industrial products to the agricultural producers decided on the obligatory deliveries undertaken by the latter. Thus the agricultural producers undertook in advance to deliver definite quantities of agricultural products to the procurement organizations. These undertakings resulted from decisions taken by the peasant associations of the villages, decisions which were followed by contracts signed between the state and the associations. In reality, the latter took no decisions. They were placed in a situation where all they could do was to ratify "proposals" made by the procurement organizations. However these "decisions," once they had been approved by the peasants, were imposed on every member of the peasant association. The procurement organizations could quite easily get their proposals ratified because a refusal to accept them would entail various sanctions, beginning with the cessation of supply of industrial products. The same sanctions were used against members of an association that did not fulfill its "promises" that had been made.

From October 1929, the Council of Ministers stipulated that contracts should cover several years and the signatories of the contracts should in principle form themselves into *kolkhozes*, thereby installing a new means of exerting pressure in favor of collectivization.

Parallel with the development of the contract system, centralized and complex administrative structures were elaborated. These had to facilitate the procurement of agricultural products and accelerate collectivization. Moreover they had to provide managerial staff for the *kolkhozes*. Thus for the management of the *kolkhozes* there was the district peasant *kolkhoz* union (*kolkhoznitsy iz*) at the bottom, and at the top there were equivalent organizations for the regions and the federated republics.

From October 1929, another element of the *kolkhoz* management structure, the *kolkhoznitsa*, became a central Soviet style organ connected with the supply of equipment at credit to the *kolkhozes*, with which it agreed contracts and for whose

production it arranged the procurement, it also elaborated in association with Gosplan a plan for the development and the activities of the kolkhoz sector, and it also prepared the operating rules for the kolkhozes, etc.²⁶ This administrative structure left no place whatsoever for any initiatives of the kolkhozes and of the kolkhoz members, either in the realm of production and delivery plans or in the internal regulations of the kolkhozes.

During the summer of 1929 the existing system of machine and tractor stations (MTS) and tractor columns was united within the framework of a new central administration, the *Traktortsentra*.²⁷

In sum the decisions adopted during the second half of 1929 ended with the development of a variegated agricultural administration. The latter included, apart from the organizations already mentioned, offices entrusted with the commercial sale of the different products, and others charged with the making of certain cultivation contracts and, finally the People's Commissariat for Agriculture (*Narkhoizom*) whose competence extended over the entire Soviet Union. This administrative structure was burdensome and difficult to coordinate and therefore the different organizations which it comprised were often in conflict with each other and gave contradictory directives to the kolkhozes and to the peasants' associations. The total result of these measures was nothing less than constant pressure exercised on the peasants so as to increase the total procurement of products and the area of collectivized land.

This pressure took all kinds of forms: financial, commercial, technical (the peasants who did not cooperate were deprived of supplies, credits etc. which were promised to them); there were also administrative, political, judicial and penal pressures.

Administrative and political pressures were exerted through the Party organization and through the local bureaucracy. At first they were presented simply as an 'activation' of cadres entrusted with propaganda in favor of collectivization and of the procurement of produce. Thus from summer 1929 the villages received an increasing number of visits from Party organizers and propagandists. These cadres, arrived from the towns, collected

together the assemblies and relied on them to vote for the grain and delivery plans and for the formation of kulakhozes. They also made an effort to animate the rural soviets and to organize the poor peasants. In this way the great excitement which then developed originated mainly from elements external to the village who were quite ignorant of agricultural and peasant problems.

Simultaneously there was a reinforcement of other means of pressure. For example those who seemed "indifferent" to the current campaigns were easily accused of "kulak activity". The penal sanctions which struck at such activities were intensified and the same thing happened with the sanctions for the non delivery of the surplus of agricultural production envisaged by the *kontraktatsiia*. The description "kulak activity" became more and more frequent. Often it amounted to the "paying off of accounts" between certain villagers, but it became one of the principal methods of advancing the procurement of products and accelerating collectivization.

At this stage the multiplication of penal measures played a decisive role. At the beginning of 1929 the peasants had to pay to the state a fine equal to five times the quantity of products which might have been delivered to the state and which had not been so delivered. From June 1929 the non delivery of products which should have been supplied was punished by prison sentences, confiscation of property and even by deportation. In principle the most severe punishments were to be applied only to kulaks but this principle was frequently violated and severe punishments were also applied to medium and even to poor peasants. Moreover refusal to enter a kolhoz was considered to be a "kulak activity" and "counter-revolutionary" and punished as such.

(d) *The immediate results of these measures*

In the short term the measures taken from the fall of 1928 had a positive effect on the progress of collectivization. Table 2 shows this.

Percentage of collectivized households²⁰

June 1, 1928	2.1	January 20, 1930	21.6
June 1, 1929	3.9	February 20, 1930	50
October 1929	4.1	March 1, 1930	59.3
January 1, 1930	15.5		

The 'progress' thus achieved developed in a chaotic and contradictory way because, contrary to the official claims of that period, the majority of peasants adhered to the *kolkhoz* unwillingly for fear of administrative, financial and commercial sanctions and above all by the fear (justified) of being classed as a kulak, of seeing their property confiscated or being deported or executed.²¹

Recourse to repressive measures, arrests, executions and deportations, grew to such a scale in January and February 1930 that it engendered violent discontent among the peasantry and even early stages of revolt. At the end of February the situation had seriously deteriorated. Stalin then decided to temporarily suspend the collectivization movement. On March 2, 1930 (just as the procurement had achieved a record level),²² he published the article titled 'Giddy with success'.²³

(e) The truce of spring and summer 1930

The publication of this article by Stalin marks a truce in the offensive for 'collectivization'. This truce was imposed by the necessity to restore conditions relatively favourable for the spring sowings; otherwise there would have been famine in the land.

Stalin's article denounced the methods used for some months which, he said, could only 'discredit the idea of collectivization at one blow' and were worthy of 'Sergeant Prihubov'.²⁴

It is not clear whether the Central Committee or the Politburo had been consulted about this article. In any case, it disconcerted the local cadres because the latter had had every reason to believe that, in relying on the methods now condemned by Stalin, they were simply adhering to instructions from their superiors. Some cadres even believed that this article was false and tried to prevent its distribution, going as far as seizing it

from the peasants. The latter, conversely, received the article as a 'charter of freedom'.¹⁰

The new direction indicated by Stalin in his article of March 2 was confirmed by a resolution of the CC of March 14 1930. The CC described the 'collectivization methods' condemned by Stalin as "deviations from the Party line" and held the lower cadres responsible for these deviations. Investigation commissions were then started with the aim of "correcting the mistakes" that had been made.¹¹ However, in spite of the condemnation of 'mistaken methods' very few of the peasants who had been sentenced before March 1930 were 'rehabilitated'. In fact, deportations continued, the staying at home, or the return of those who had been subject to unjust condemnations and cruel treatment would have been too dangerous for the local cadres who had been responsible for misdeeds, confiscations and exactions. But these cadres, although 'disavowed' by the Party leadership, usually retained their positions.

There was considerable discontent among the local cadres. This can be traced in the press and in the Smolensk Archives.¹² Present-day Soviet literature also draws attention to this discontent. For example, it is possible to read how the secretary of an important Party organization, named Khas'evich, attacked in a letter of April 6 1930 accusations leveled at the local cadres alone. He wrote:

We are receiving numerous complaints (from Party cadres) that they have been unjustifiably treated as idiots. Really, instructions should have been given to the central press so that when criticizing the deviations and the excesses which have been committed, it should not include not solely the local officials.¹³

Stalin therefore found it necessary to review once again the 'collectivization methods': this took the form of an article published in *Pravda* of April 3 1930 and entitled 'A reply to the Kolahezh comrades'. Here Stalin treats the 'mistakes concerning the peasant question'. He claims that what is at the root of these errors

is the mistaken way of treating the middle peasants. It is the violence used in the economic relationships with the middle peasant. It is forgetting the fact that the economic alliance with the mass of middle peasants must be based not on measures of coercion but on an understanding with the middle peasant, and on the alliance with him.⁴⁰

Considerations like these characterize the directives issued during the first months of this year and they all have an underlying motivation. The latter is the fear of *explosive discontent of the peasantry and the fear of seeing exasperated peasants neglect their work in the fields*. Hence the slogan, "Proper organization of sowing – that is the task!"⁴¹

As soon as pressure was relaxed on the peasants their fundamentally hostile attitude to "collectivization" showed itself quite openly. For example, the proportion of household 'collectivized' diminished as can be seen from the following table.

Percentage of collectivized households

March 1, 1930	59.3	May 1930	28
March 10, 1930	54	June 1930	24
April 1930	37	October 1, 1930	21.7

In October 1930 the number of collectivized households reached its lowest level. Part of the peasants still remaining on the kolkhozes were there because they had no other means of surviving since, following the expropriation and the liquidation of the "kulaks," the major share of the means of production in the villages was concentrated in the kolkhozes. Other peasants stayed in the "collective" farms because they feared that there would be another "change of line." The latter did occur, when the 1930 harvest was almost finished and when at the top of the Party the last remnants of resistance to a resumption of "collectivization from above" had been shattered.⁴² At this point collectivization resumed in a manner more systematic than in the preceding winter. This new collectivization continued steadily throughout the 1930s.

III. The course of the "Socialist offensive" in the campaigns of the 1930s

There was a record harvest in 1930. In fact, in the spring of 1930, peasant discontent having been somewhat moderated thanks to decisions taken at the beginning of March, the sowing campaign had been successful. Moreover, the weather had been favorable. For the authorities this harvest was particularly encouraging because it enabled them to more than double the grain collection, compared to 1928. These two successes persuaded the authorities that the situation in the countryside was henceforth 'under control' and that the collectivization campaign could be restarted.

Up to the end of 1930 the pressure put on the peasants increased only slightly: thus on January 1, 1931 the percentage of households that had been collectivized was only 27.5 percent. The slowness of this growth was not in accord with the 'objectives' of the authorities. The latter then decided to hurry things along. From the first months of 1931 there was a renewal of 'pressure': the percentage of collectivized households grew sharply. By July 1, 1931 it reached 57.1 percent.⁴⁴

Henceforth it was 'methods' which were in question. The decision to carry out collectivization was irrevocable, whatever might be the cost for the peasants and for uncollectivized production. The authorities wanted to put the peasants in a strictly subordinate position and to have available structures which would permit them to impose the highest possible grain delivery.

Toward the end of the 1930s the aims that the authorities pursued in this manner were to all intents and purposes achieved. Consequently, the official history of the Party proclaimed the 'dazzling victory of socialism'.⁴⁵

The following official figures illustrate this 'victory'. In 1939 the 'individual peasants' were only 3.1 percent of the rural population. At the same period there were 81.4 million kolkhozniks (compared to 2.3 millions in 1928); the number of people belonging to the families of state farm workers and MTS workers was around 8 million, or 7 percent of the rural population.⁴⁶

Thus the millions of peasants (living in conditions of great inequality) and the tens of thousands of genuine cooperative members who were in existence at the end of the 1920s were replaced by kolkhozniks and by the wage earners of the state farms and MTS.

The official comment on these figures affirms that during the 1930s a "new world" had been born in the Soviet countryside. This is undeniable. But what was this "new world"? This question cannot be answered without examining more closely the conditions in which it was born, the social relationships on which it was built, and the economic conditions in which it functioned.

IV. Collectivization and mass repression

The "collectivization campaign" of winter 1929-30 was used as a "model" for the later collectivization campaign in spite of the "reprimand" and the "calls to order" addressed to the base and local cadres after the publication of Stalin's article and the decisions of the Central Committee of March and April 1930. The enquiries that were opened at this time gave a quite good picture of the "methods used for collectivization" but there is only partial knowledge of their findings. The latter are mostly accessible through certain statements made by the authorities and some articles which are based on a small portion of archival documents.

Nevertheless, what is known is enough to reveal the scale of the anti-peasant repression and its mainly blind and arbitrary character. Numerous executions and expropriations were carried out under pretexts that were absurd and lacking any legal base. Quite a few operations had the effect of eliminating local cadres or satisfying quarrels. The superior authorities usually let these things happen, or even encouraged them, because these operations (even when they caused violent local reactions) did meet the main demand: they fostered terror and paralysed the peasants.

The Ukraine was one of the republics where the anti-peasant repression connected with "collectivization" and with pseudo

"dekulakization" was most severe. In certain regions of the republic up to 50 percent of peasant households were "dekulakized" in 1930. This proportion is at least five times greater than the number of households which up to then had been officially considered as "kulak." This clearly means that the majority of those who were stricken in no way belonged to this social group. Moreover, numerous investigations show that any occurrence was likely to become a pretext for "dekulakization." For example, simple peasant brawls were described by the courts as "terroristic acts" (*terrokt*) and were recognized among counter-revolutionary activities which could entail the death penalty.¹⁷

Thus, in the region of the giant kolkhoz which was called *Chagant*, it is known that of the 1,200 households "dekulakized" in 1930, 400 were later officially recognized as *srednyak* (middle peasant) households. In one Lithuanian village about 85 percent of the "dekulakized" households (mostly condemned to deportation) were later released as *srednyaks*. In principle such deportees, if they survived, were authorized to return to their village; in reality this authorization often had no effect.

Investigations show that at the beginning of 1930 in many cases, *srednyaks* were "dekulakized" under false pretences, perhaps because they had sold a cow some months earlier, or even hay.¹⁸

At the beginning of 1930 the anti-peasant repression was such a case that the railways were overloaded with trains of deportees, of whom many died en route. The peasants called these trains "death trains." They carried away entire families and quite often women and children whose husbands and fathers had been executed as "counter-revolutionaries." The number of such trains was so great that it constituted, as was officially admitted, a burden which is beyond the resources of the State.¹⁹ The Politburo then decided to allocate by quota to the different regions the means of transport for this purpose.²⁰

The publication of Stalin's article of March 2, 1930 did not change the lot of hundreds of thousands of expropriated peasants: they remained attached to temporary camps where many perished. The expropriations and deportations which followed the resumption of "collectivization" of the winter of 1930-31

heretofore followed without any real interruption the deportation of those expropriated in the winter of 1929-30. Hence the ascending succession of 'death trains,' about which A. L. Strong wrote in 1930:

Several times during the spring and summer I saw these echelons moving along the railroad - a doleful sight, men, women and children uprooted.¹

Another witness of this repression and its results which continued well beyond 1930 and 1931, was V. Serge:

Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy north, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. These were whole populations, denuded of everything, the old folk starved to death in mid-journey, newborn babies were buried on the banks of the roadside and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses of boughs and white wood. Other populations, dragging all their meagre possessions on wagons, rushed towards the frontiers of Poland, Rumania and China and crossed them by no means intact. To be sure in spite of the machine guns.²

Becoming a kolkhoznik did not shelter a peasant from deportation as a kulak. Not only could his past be at any time interpreted to give cause for sentencing but his current attitude could also be taken as a 'sign' that he remained a *proletar*. He therefore lived under the constant threat of being condemned. Such condemnations were not rare, especially those which punished 'lack of respect' for the collective property.

In fact the growing demands of the state in the matter of grain deliveries, and the distrust felt by the majority of the Party cadres and by the Party leaders towards those peasants led to the authorities 'harassing' the kolkhozniks (*dogoryat kolkhoznikov*), the term being used in July 1931 by Agricultural Commissioner, Yakovlev. The latter protested against what he called 'mass anti-kolkhoz actions' and declared that the members of kolkhozes had become 'an object of unadulterated arbitrariness' (*ponyi proizvol*).³

Prisoners by several Party leaders (who would be purged later) did not help. The brutality and the arbitrariness continued. As for the kulaks, they cooperated less and less as their feeling that the claimed collectivization was a nationalization or expropriation grew stronger.⁴

Sentences were pronounced also for what might be called acts of negligence: the CC demanded such sentences without any indulgence.⁵ The concept of negligence was all-embracing, it included even what the authorities described as reasonable indifference, categorized as sabotage. But part of this alleged sabotage was nothing but the refusal of kulaks to obey irrational directives coming from authorities who overrode the kulaks in deciding where and when to sow and in issuing absurd orders like 'sow on top of the snow' ('to save time'!).⁶

Thus the reasons for arresting and deporting peasants carrying out mass repressions were numerous. Official figures minimized the scale of these measures. Thus the Party history published in 1962 admits that there were a little more than 240 000 families deported, or more than 1 200 000 people, but this figure only covered the period from 1940 to the end of 1952 in the regions of complete collectivization.

The measures introduced from the end of 1940 were, as compared to those taken a little earlier (arrests, deportations, etc.) but they were applied with more vigor in the name of dekulakization. Sentences and deportations reflected not only of the genuine rich peasants but also of any peasant suspected or accused on the basis of unverified denunciations of 'prokulak' sympathy and counted as a 'kulak'.⁷ The mass collectivization was thus imposed while any savings that were left for it were seriously punished. Deportation was the most common punishment but when many peasants protested OGPU (what was authorized to execute without trial) sent some peasants on the spot to encourage the hesitant collectivists.⁸

The Smolensk Archives contain numerous records which give some idea of the scale and brutality of the repressions as well as the fear which it exerted not only in the countryside but also in the towns. Many workers still had their families in the villages.

The fear was such that positively developed: whereas previously two men of the militia were needed to escort one arrested man, in 1931 one militia man could escort a whole group of prisoners. For many arrests seemed almost a relief compared with the agonised waiting for it. Entire families were arrested, including children.³¹ Some parents even preferred to put an end to the suffering of their young children rather than see them die in this way.³²

What developed was a veritable anti-peasant war. It culminated in 1932-34 when the combination of bad harvests, massive requisitions of cereals and the reduction to a minimum of the amount of grain sent back to the hungry villagers condemned millions of peasants to death from famine or undernourishment. The continuance at any price of the massive requisitions of food products by the state organizations entrusted with the procurements and the refusal to give up to the regions stricken by famine can be partly explained by the wish to export grain so as to permit the purchase of industrial equipment abroad and by the priority promised for the towns food supply.

The Webbs' great admirers of the "collectivization" achieved in such conditions "justified" the "sentences of death by famine" in the following words:

Collective farms which had wretchedly neglected or refused to till their land were strictly refused food so as not to encourage further recalcitrancy and, in some of the worst cases the inhabitants of whole villages, guilty in order to save them from starvation, were summarily removed from the land they had neglected or refused to cultivate and deported elsewhere to find absorbing work or any sort for their maintenance.³³

The repression was supposed to teach the kulaks the "rightness". Thus a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Seventeenth Party Conference (January 31-February 4 1932), that they "were not so literally honest in regard to state interests."³⁴

In order to teach the kulaks to be "upright" the C.E. called for punishment "without indulgence" for any refusal to

deliver grain." The grain collection campaign became a test of strength or as Kaganovich said "the touchstone of our strength or weakness and of the strength and weakness of our system. Any indulgence of lower cadres towards the peasants for example "indulgence" which cadres might demonstrate by asking for a reduction of procurements imposed on peasants affected by famine) was considered as aid given to the enemy and was punished as such.

So as to permit the "punishment" of the peasants there had to be further development of the repressive mechanism, promulgation of new laws, and the extended interpretation of those laws already in force.

Thus the law of August 7, 1932 (which the peasants called the law of 73) was promulgated to enlarge the repressive arsenal. It allowed for example, sentences of six years of deportation for the gathering of ears of corn by too hungry peasants. Thousands of peasants, including children were deported by virtue of this law. These sentences were in addition to arbitrary measures imposed on the spot by different commissaries. They were also in addition to the increasingly numerous sentences pronounced by virtue of Article 58 of the Penal Code of the RSFSR. Interpreting this article in an all embracing way, tribunals attributed bad harvests, the pitiful state of agricultural equipment, etc. to wreckers who were arrested, imprisoned, deported or detained in camps. The duration of these sentences could be ten years or more.²⁰

The character of the anti-peasant war of the 1932-34 famine was also shown in an exchange of letters between Stalin and the Soviet writer Sholokhov. In April 16, 1933 the latter wrote to Stalin in protest against the revolting acts committed against peasants and which he believed (or pretended to believe) were the results of local excesses which had the result of impoverishing the peasants of grain and led to mass arrests including the arrest of Party members.²¹ In his reply (only published ten years later) Stalin admitted that "excesses" might have been perpetrated, but he claimed that they were only of minor importance because he said:²²

The honorable cultivators of your region and not only of your region, indulged in sabotage and were

determined to capture the workers and the Red Army to grant the fact that this sabotage was carried out apparently without violence (Devid was not directly involved) to the fact that the Soviet collective farmers were attacking it as a line "war against Soviet power."¹⁰

In a conversation between Stalin and Comintern Secretary Zinoviev the latter, in his memoirs, the General Secretary, "insisted the struggle for collectivization, with the most terrible consequences of the war against Soviet power."¹¹

Toward the end of 1931 the pressure bearing on the peasants seemed to moderate somewhat, but this did not entice the peasants of the liquidation measures previously decided. In 1932, reason continued to destroy Soviet power, the starving kolkhozniks.

The number of peasant victims of this repression is impossible to estimate precisely. But some idea of the scale can be obtained. Thus, the Soviet demographer Leonid, utilizing the official statistics of the Second Five Year Plan, was able to determine that several million people died in 1933.

The savage increase of mortality in 1932-34 was due to both famine among peasants who stayed in their original homelands and to the excess mortality which struck the farmers deported to the camps or to inhospitable regions. Leonid says that there were 100,000 deaths in 1932. In general, it is estimated for the period covering the end of the First Five Year Plan and the beginning of the Second that about ten million peasants were deported. These figures cannot be added. These peasants were a segment of those who could not be deported with fullness because of the number of victims inflicted by a famine which ran up to 1933. About 100,000 died in 1933, the number in excess of 100,000 of the deported peasants was 100,000 victims.

The profound logic of the historical process which has been described in broad outline is clear and simple. The liquidation of the peasantry. The latter destroyed right to the gains of the peasant revolution of 1917. Its agents were the leaders of the Party and of the state apparatus. The triumph of the capitalist revolution demanded the extermination of peasants working as small independent producers. It required

to what Marx had already written about "primitive accumulation" (which simply was repeated here just as it was repeated in colonial countries when the bourgeois imperialists proceeded to the expropriation of the villagers in favor of "the development of capitalism"):

Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods.⁷³

The expropriation of the peasants which took place in the USSR through the 1930s had obviously nothing in common, despite all the talk about "socialist construction," with what Marx called "the negation of private capitalist property" which according to him was to reestablish not private property but individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era, cooperation, and the communal possession of land and the means of production produced by work itself.⁷⁴

Notes

1. The *mir* was the village commune collectively owning the land. The *skhod* was the peasant assembly.
2. See *Konvunktorny i vyvleleni zhurnalov mirovogo khozyaystva i mirovaya politika*, No. 10, 1937.
3. See Vol. 2 of the present work, pp. 82-89.
4. See above, p. 87.
5. See above, p. 99.
6. Interestingly enough, this happened just as Lenin had envisaged it in 1917, a time when he defined the obshchinas as a local organization of autonomous peasant [see *The Agrarian Question in the Russian Revolution* and the quotation from this piece in S. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière et paysanne en URSS 1921-1929*, (Paris 1976).] This "winded" the Soviet leaders.

- * A much detailed analysis of what happened at this time in the Soviet countryside has been given in Vol. 2 of this work pp. 87-126. The reader may refer to this. Here we are looking at only those aspects which illuminate the way in which certain forces external to the village (thereas present in the leading Party) made use of the peasantry's internal contradictions in order to subordinate it to new exploitative relationships.
8. Pravda, March 11, 1928.
9. See Vol. 2 of this work, p. 107.
10. Quoted in R. Lorenz, *Sozialgeschichte der Sowjetunion 1917-1945*, Frankfurt 1978, p. 173.
11. See above, p. 174.
12. See KSSS 1935, Vol. 2, pp. 45-46 especially p. 101.
13. See above, pp. 45-46.
14. Yu. A. Mezlov, *Zemlevaya problema i gody spetsialnoi kollektivizatsii* (919-932 gg. (Moscow 1963) pp. 81-82 R. Baermann, 'The Grain Problem and Anti-Speculation Laws', *Social Studies* No. 19, 1967-68 pp. 124-24 R. Lorenz, *Sozialgeschichte* pp. 175-76.
15. KPSS (1953), Vol. 2, pp. 500-501.
16. Pravda, November 7, 1929.
17. KPSS (1953), Vol. 2, p. 451.
18. See above p. 50. According to these targets, the sown area of the collective was to double in one year; they had been 1.8 million hectares in 1929. From 1930 socialist agriculture was to provide 50 percent of the grain distributed outside the villages!
19. See above, p. 545.
20. See KPSS (1953), Vol. 2, pp. 544-45.
21. For the types of collectivization, see Vol. 2 of this work, p. 494, note 104.
22. On this point, see Vol. 2 of this work, pp. 454-64. Also, Stalin, *Leninism* (London 1940) pp. 328-32. We return to the repression connected with collectivization in the last section of this chapter.
23. See above.
24. KSAH, p. 183 and p. 184.
25. A more detailed analysis of what was ruthlessly exterminated in the Soviet Union is given in *History of the USSR* (London 1976) p. 72.
26. While up to 1929 the kulaks (middle peasants) were still a ruling class of 5 families and owning 50-60 horses in 1927 they comprised on average 25 families. The government later went on to put kulaks in labour camps, thousands of villages and grouping hundreds of families. On this point see the documents in *Materials for History of the USSR*, Vols. 1 to 7, Moscow 1957 and 1957. *Proletarskie Iskhodnye dani* (The kulak economy), KSAH 1926-1927, Moscow 1960, especially pp. 70-71. KSAH, M. Lenin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (London 1961-1962) pp. 476-79 which also quotes V. I. Lenin, *On the kulak question*, see *Works of Lenin*, Vol. 33, Moscow 1963, new edition, pp. 28-31, 175-76.
27. Some material on peasant life especially KSAH documents 1929-30 and 37.
28. M. Lenin, *Russian Peasants*, p. 274 and p. 408.

- 29 See above p. 410.
- 30 See M. Lewis, *Russian Peasants*, pp. 410 and 514; E. Zaleski, *Planification de la croissance et fluctuations économiques en URSS* (Paris, 1941), p. 100; C. Bettelheim, *La Planification soviétique* (Paris, 1945), p. 33. References to the various Soviet sources used can be found in these books. The percentages quoted here correspond to orders of size and not to an absolute measure. The fact that the figures include a first decimal digit should not be taken as evidence of precision. Calculations later made with archival material show that the statistics of the period are extremely acceptable with the qualification that different regions where figures make up these documents did not stick always to a rigid definition of "households collectivized".
- 31 See Vol. 2 of this work, pp. 461ff.
- 32 State procurements for grain rose to 10.1 and 22.1 million tons in 1929 and 1930, against 10.8 million in 1928. See Yu. A. Moskau, *Zernovaya problema v gody kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaystva in istorii sovetskogo krest'yanskogo i kollektivnogo stroitel'stva v SSSR* (Moscow, 1983), p. 271.
- 33 *Pravda*, March 2, 1930 and J. Stalin, *Leninism*, pp. 333-38.
- 34 Stalin, *Leninism*, p. 336. Prishibeyev is an old dictatorial sergeant in one of Chekhov's stories.
- 35 *Tajour* File 374, ref. 9, doc. 418/7 and 12, quoted by V. Yatskovskii, "Rapports agricoles et collectivisation" in *Recherches Internationales de la fondation du marxisme*, No. 4, 1975, p. 87.
- 36 This term was used by A. L. Strong in *The Stalin Era* (New York, 1949), p. 39.
- 37 KPSS (1953), pp. 548ff.
- 38 These archives, seized by the German army when it occupied the city of Smolensk, were later captured by the U.S. Army and can be consulted in the USA. Marie Fainosed made a partial scan of them which he published in his book *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (New York, 1954). On this point see also Vol. 2 of this present work.
- 39 VI, No. 3, 1965, p. 25.
- 40 Stalin, *Leninism*, p. 339.
- 41 Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 12, 234.
- 42 See note 30 above.
- 43 The right of the Party suffered new defeats in 1930 following the Sixteenth Party Congress (June 25-July 13). Tomsky was excluded from the Politburo. However the same Congress again re-elected Bukharin to the CC. On November 19, 1930 Bukharin capitulated (see his declaration *Pravda* of November 20). Although this capitulation was considered "in name" it gave the signal for the suspension of all attempts at "revolutionary" collectivization from above. Those who continued to make such attempts were then hit hard (see S. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1924), p. 350).
- 44 See note 30 above.
- 45 *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Dobshenskiy, Moscow, 1929), p. 319.

- 40 The figures given for 1936 are those of A. Arutyunyan. "Socialisme ou anarcho-socialisme?" *USSR Mirror* 1936, p. 30 note 4. For 1938 see A. Arutyunyan, *L'Asie mineure*, p. 407. For the various changes in the Soviet countryside, see also B. Karbely, *La Société soviétique contemporaine*, Paris 1972, p. 80.
- 41 See M. Lewin, "L'Etat et les classes sociales en URSS 1929-1933" in *Annales de la recherche sociale et sociale sciences* February 1976, which quotes in particular, *Sotsobnoye pravitel'stvo*, No. 7, 1931.
- 42 See the article by A. Angere, "Socialism and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class," in *Sotsobnoye pravitel'stvo*, No. 6, 1930.
- 43 See Verbitsky in *Sotsobnoye pravitel'stvo* No. 3, 1931, p. 34.
- 44 See M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, p. 506.
- 45 See A. L. Strong, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* (New York 1911), p. 30.
- 46 Victor Serge, *Memories of a Revolutionary 1903-1941* (London 1963), p. 147.
- 47 A. Ya. Yakovlev, "Peasant organizations, *Sotsobnoye pravitel'stvo* Moscow 1933, quoted by M. Lewin in "L'Etat et les classes sociales" p. 32 & 33.
- 48 The expression "class-struggle socialism" was even used by a peasant delegate to the Sixteenth Congress of Soviets. He expressed that concept by saying the peasants of the masses of their labor.
- 49 *PS*, No. 5, 1933, p. 82.
- 50 Stalin in effect had said that the kulaks must be liquidated and it was necessary to make decisions without delay, at even against their advice. That is how Khrushchev came to give the order to "go on top of the curve" and then to arrest those who refused. See S. Khrushchev, *Sergey Mikheevich Kirov* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 144-47, 176.
- 51 *Imperialist USSR* (Moscow 2nd Edition 1966), p. 193.
- 52 Estimated by M. Lewin in *Russian Peasants*, p. 507.
- 53 Literally "sub-human" see Vol. 2 of this work, p. 31.
- 54 See A. Colling, *The Russian Empire*, London 1970, p. 99.
- 55 See the documents registered under VAP 56 in the Smolensk Archives quoted by M. Fainberg in *Sovietism*, p. 259.
- 56 See especially on this subject A. Colling, *The Russian Empire*, p. 111.
- 57 S. and E. Weber, *Soviet Communism: A New Class System?* (London 1949), Vol. 1, p. 279.
- 58 *Imperialist USSR* (Moscow 1962), p. 206, quoted by M. Lewin in "Socialism and the Soviet State in the Period of the Five Year Plans" *Social History* May 1978, p. 183.
- 59 *PS*, No. 5, 1933, p. 82, quoted after M. Lewin, "Socialism and the Soviet State," p. 164.
- 60 The text of this Article 59 figures in the Press Code of the RSFSR promulgated in 1926. It is drawn to my notice a fact that it allows a very wide interpretation as to what evidence is the state. The text of Article 59 can be found in B. Lazarev, *The Great Terror* (London, 1966), p. 35. The first sentence of A. Arutyunyan's *Les paysans d'Asie mineure* gives some examples of how widely this Article could be interpreted, making particular use of A. Vrubel'sky's *Il y avait 25 millions de paysans en Asie mineure* (Moscow, 1934).

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67. Extracts from the letter are in V. P. Danilov, *Ocherki istorii kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaystva v SSSR*, p. 55.
68. *Pravda*, March 10, 1943 and also Danilov, *Ocherki*, p. 58.
69. There are traces of other protests apart from Sholokhov's. For example there was a protest by R. Terekhov, Secretary of the Ukrainian Party, which describes the dramatic rural situation in that republic. In *Pravda* of May 26, 1948 the addressee of this letter, Stalin, describes its author as a storyteller. Writers and eyewitnesses have described the situation of deserted villages, with houses having their windows boarded up and material abandoned in the fields. (See the unpublished memoirs of A. L. Kosterin, quoted by R. Medvedev in his *Last History Judge* (London, 1972), p. 85.)
70. W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. 4, London, 1951, p. 44.
The conversation went as follows:
"... have the stresses of this war been as heavy to you personally as carrying through the policy of the Collective Farms?"
"Oh, no," he said, "the Collective Farm policy was a terrible struggle."
"... you were not dealing with a few score thousands of aristocrats or big landowners, but with millions of small men."
"Ten millions," he said, holding up his hands. "It was fearful. Four years it lasted..."
71. B. C. Uralov, *Voyny i narodonaseleniye Evropy*, (Moscow, 1960). Also the same author's contribution to the journal *Naseleniye i narodnoye blagosostoyaniye*, (Moscow, 1968), quoted by Maksudov, "Portes ouvertes par la population de l'URSS 1918-1958," in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, July-September, 1977, p. 250.
72. See M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, p. 508.
73. K. Marx, *Capital* (1891, Swan Sonnenschein edition, London), pp. 787-88, Marx's italics.
74. K. Marx, *Das Kapital* (1933, Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute edition, Vienna), p. 803, Marx's italics.

· Socialist" agriculture in the 1930s

ACCORDING to the official description, Soviet agriculture in the late 1930s comprised essentially three types of "socialist" production units:¹ sovkhozes (or state farms), MTS (machine and tractor stations) and kolkhozes (or "collective farms"). The first two forms of agricultural activity were supposed to have a "superior" character compared with the kolkhozes, because they were directly tied with the state.²

This categorization does not tell us much about the real social relationships in which the direct producers were placed. Nevertheless, it permits a distinction between the *wage-earners* of the sovkhozes and the MTS who were in a situation similar to that of industrial workers (see Part Two of this volume) and the *kolkhozniks*. The situation of these latter requires a specific analysis, which brings into discussion a kolkhoz system whose reality may be contrasted with the fiction of official announcements. This contrast needs to be clarified before proceeding to an analysis in greater detail of the economic effects of the "socialization" of agriculture and of its consequences for class relationships.

1. The kolkhoz as fiction and as reality

Official discussion repeated endlessly the image of a certain "fictional kolkhoz" and this fiction developed in the areas of

politics, law and economics to say nothing of art, literature and novels conforming to the standards, of "socialist realism".

In this fiction, the *kolkhoz* was 'the result of a policy of voluntary membership' on the part of the peasants who, with the help of the state, spontaneously and on massive numbers the path of collective agriculture. From this there resulted the birth of "socialist cooperatives" which had the paid status of the "artel" (one of the traditional Russian forms of production cooperation). The latter had at its collective disposal "agricultural equipment, livestock, seedstocks, forage for the collective livestock, and the working premises needed for the proper operation of the collective husbandry." Its management was entrusted to the general assembly of the *kolkhoz* while the central administration was entrusted to an elected chairman and controlled by the same general assembly. For the principle cropping operations, the *kolkhozes* benefited from the cooperation of the MTS in which was concentrated the main agricultural equipment. The incomes collected by the *kolkhozniks* by virtue of 'collective exploitation' depended solely on their labor.⁴

From 1937 the Party press, Soviet films etc proclaimed a "brilliant victory of socialism" in agriculture. The increase in the harvest gathered from land generously provided with tractors and agricultural machines,⁵ and with the field workers enjoying an unprecedented prosperity.

The reality was quite different and much more complex. We already know what voluntary adherence of the peasants to the collective farms really means, and we know about the repression which befell the peasants during the course of collectivization and afterward, aiming to subject the peasants to the discipline that the system required. However to grasp the reality of socialist agriculture something must be said about the economic effects of the socialist transformation on the countryside and of its impact on the living conditions of the rural masses and a few something about the internal economic relationships of the *kolkhoz* and its subordination to the demands of accumulation by the state. It is only after doing all this that one can attempt to describe the *kolkhoz* system and the role which it played in the total picture of economic and social relationships that developed during the 1930s.

II. The economic effects of the "socialization" of agriculture

The economic effects of the 'socialization' of agriculture can be studied at different levels. Here, we shall mainly limit ourselves to data relating to production, the quotas placed on agriculture (or the latter were made possible by the new agrarian structures) and figures relating to the living conditions of the *kolkhozniks*, who henceforth represented the great mass of rural workers.

(a) *The crisis in agricultural production and stock breeding*

The transformation of agrarian structures did not bring about the vast increase of harvests and livestock which the Party had expected. On the contrary, it was accompanied universally by a crisis in agricultural production. This crisis which ended not in the 1930s but continued rather longer did not affect different types of agricultural production in the same way (certain branches, particularly lucky, were even untouched), but it struck the essential branches and especially the all-important grain production. Given the decisive role of the latter we must give some indications of its development during the 1930s—these figures cover all forms of agriculture both 'socialized' and non-socialized.⁷

In 1930 (the year when sowing took place after the pressure for collectivization was relaxed) the gross grain harvest rose to 77.1 million tons.⁸ After that date the harvest collapsed in an almost continuous curve up to the middle of the 1930s. The worst harvest was that of 1936. The following table can be composed:

Grain Production (millions of tons) ⁹	
1930	77.1
1931	58.1
1932	67.0
1933	37.1
1934	67.2

It was calculated on from above, which was intended to
a heavy step forward in the grain production of the USSR
thereby it pointing to enable the budget for results to be
achieved quite the contrary. For other food crops the develop-
ment of the situation was a little less bad but was far from
compensating for the grain crisis.

meat production also went into deep decline. The index on this product (100 in 1913) had reached 137 in 1928 and 124 in 1929, fell to 65 in 1931 and recovered only to 120 and 114 in 1938 and 1940 respectively.¹⁰

The drop in animal production was at first a result of the mass slaughter of livestock, in which almost all the peasants indulged between 1928 and 1930, procurements and collectivization farms alike being regarded as virtual expropriation. The destruction of livestock continued upto 1933. Taking just the figures for the bovine population, the latter fell from 70.5 million in 1928 to 52.5 million in 1930. It reached a trough in 1933 (44.4 million) and then recovered slightly in 1934 (42.4 million). In 1948 this figure was still only 50.9 million - very much below that of 1928. The latter figure would only be regained well after the war.

The situation was no better for other livestock raising. The reduction of the number of cows implied a reduction in the available tractive force, which was all the more serious because the number of horses fell equally, dropping from 384 million head in 1928 to 17 or 18 million at the end of the decade. The reduction of livestock had unfavorable repercussions on the amount of natural fertilizer available for agriculture.

the loss in livestock was quite rapidly compensated by the investment effort made in means of production originating from industry means which replaced what had been destroyed. For example, in 1935 the tractor power available to agriculture greatly exceeded thanks to mechanization that of 1928¹⁴ and this improvement continued after 1935. In the same way the production of mineral fertilizers rose quite considerably in the second half of the 1930s. This increase in the material factors of production put at the disposal of the country was not enough to prevent the agricultural crisis continuing in the second half of the 1930s.

essentially the decisive factor in this crisis was the human factor, the peasant resistance to collectivization, and to every other movement the Soviet Government made towards the agricultural revolution which the peasant masses did not accept. This resistance manifested itself in particular by the tendency to work lazily on the collective land and to carry out negligently the required tasks.¹⁵

This resistance at first active and then above all passive was accompanied by a reduction of the standard of living in the countryside. The effects of the resistance were aggravated by the physical enfeeblement of the peasantry, which was undernourished, abandoned to famine and from which were recruited millions of men in their prime, either to go to work voluntarily in industry, hoping to increase their incomes, or to be deported into inhospitable regions where most often they were used in the timber industry, the mines and in big construction sites.

In March 1931 at the Eleventh Congress of Soviets, Yakov Sverdlov criticized the behavior of the kolkhozniks in the light of frequent observations according to him, the kolkhozniks got up at 6 o'clock in the morning, even in peak periods, then chatted with their neighbors without hurrying, just when they were ready to leave for fields the time came for the peasant breakfast. During working hours work was done negligently, ploughing was done hurriedly and left the soil in a bad state, sowing also took place hastily, at harvest time the grain was so badly loaded that it fell from the carts and stayed mixed up in the straw.¹⁶ The resistance deeply disturbed the work of collective agriculture. It explains why the investment made by the state to increase agricultural production led to such poor results.

The seriousness of the agricultural crisis following collectivization from above does not justify the conclusion that the latter was mistaken, for such a conclusion would evade the basic logic which had inspired collectivization. In fact from the authorities' point of view, the socialization of agriculture was the only way leading to the consolidation of their grip on society by reducing to a minimum (by the use of violence, by famine, and by the disorganization of the peasantry) the capacity for organized resistance by the peasants to the demands

of expropriation. It made it possible to very much increase the appropriations made from agriculture.

(b) Appropriations made from agriculture

Numerous attempts have been made to measure 'the growth of the appropriations made from agriculture during the 1930s and even to 'make a balance sheet' by putting a value to the net effect, positive or negative of these exactions on the structure of state and industry. These evaluations have provoked many controversies.¹ However interesting they may be, these discussions do not seem capable of resulting in global quantitative conclusions.

In fact collectivization and mass repression led above all to qualitative changes in an upheaval in social relationships which subjected the countryside to the requirements of the authorities. Henceforth the countryside was open to extortion, and the exactions made from the peasants' production and income and from the peasant population itself were various: an increase of procurement, the imposition of taxes, making to pay for the use of agricultural machinery concentrated in the MTS, taxes, the development of 'gaps' between industrial and agricultural prices which went against the peasants, the compulsory contribution by kolkhozniks to the establishment of the 'productive funds' of the kolkhozes, etc. These exactions revealed only certain aspects of the pillage of the countryside. Another aspect more important would appear later, namely the drawing off of part of the peasant labour force toward industry and the mines either as free workers or as forced labour. In the one case this drawing off took the form of an urbanization and industrialization process; in the other it took the form of deportations whose scale is not, as we have seen, easily translated into figures.

For the moment, we will look at some of the forms of exaction which are relatively better known.

- (i) The increase in the quantity of agricultural products appropriated in the countryside

The appropriations that the state made from agricultural production moved through several channels: purchases of

products,¹⁸ obligatory deliveries" (for which the price was even less than for "purchased" products and lacking any pretence of "sales contracts") requisitions, confiscations, taxes-in-kind, payment-in-kind for "services rendered" by the MTS etc. It would be tedious and useless to list all these forms of exactions and their respective importance (which in any case were very variable and often little known). We will therefore generalize all these exactions under the term "*procurements*," and then give some indications about the actual conditions in which the procurements were achieved. We will concentrate our attention on the procurement of grain, which had decisive economic and social importance.

The official figures covering the harvest and the procurement of grain do not always agree. We regard as particularly significant those quoted by M. Levin in his contribution to *Essays in Honor of E.H. Carr*. For several key years the figures are as follows.¹⁹

	<i>Grain harvest</i> (million tons)	<i>Procurement</i>	<i>Balance</i> (gross)
1928	73.3	10.7	62.6
1930	77.1	22.1	55.0
1931	69.4	22.8	46.6
1935	62.4	28.3	34.1
1939	67.3	32.1*	35.2

* Average of 1938-40

The figures quoted (which are confirmed by numerous other sources) indicate that the reduction of the gross balance remaining is an almost continuous curve until the mid 1930s. At that period, the gross balance left in the countryside was no more than 54 percent of that in 1928.

Between 1935 and 1939, the balance rose only by 0.9 million tons while production increased by 4.9 million. This increase therefore was hardly a "paying proposition" for the peasantry.

The quantities of grain which the villages had at their effective disposition did not fall quite at the same speed. In fact grain was resold by the state to the villagers either in the "traditionally" deficit regions or in certain cases of famine

These sales were generally made at a price greater than the buying price of these same crops by the state in the form of procurements. In any case, in the years 1932-34 the quantities moved to the countryside were very much less than those which exacerbated the famine from which the peasantry was at that time suffering.

When one takes into account the reserves which it had always possible to keep, the net balance available to the village may be obtained. During the First Five-Year Plan the state procured daily food approximately 45 million tons to 53.6 million between 1928-29 and 1931-32.² This meant famine conditions for the need for grain used for sowing and for livestock, even if the massive reduction of livestock tended to somewhat reduce the need for grain in the countryside, a circumstance which helped to increase the grain procurements.

During the 1930s the state also very much increased the exports which it made on agricultural products other than grain.³ The overall result of the policy which was followed was a substantial fall of consumption of most agricultural products in the countryside.

This fall was not in reality compensated by an increase in the supplies and payments which came to the peasants. On the contrary, there was a serious deterioration in the terms of exchange between the state and countryside. Hence the negative effect for the peasantry of the increased exports made on agricultural production.

The shortcomings of the available statistics allow us to sketch only some aspects of the development of the terms of exchange between the state and peasants, and notably the monetary and financial aspects.

(2) The terms of exchange between state and peasantry

The state-peasantry terms of exchange varied considerably during the 1930s. The following points involve above all the kulchik peasantry which soon represented the majority of peasants.

During the First Five-Year Plan exchanges between the peasants and "towns" (which essentially means the state procurements)

organizations) were, in principle, always regulated by the *kontraktatsiya* by virtue of which the peasants "promised" in fact the promise was made by administrative centres who stood in the peasants' name) to deliver predetermined quantities of products to the state. In return the latter was to provide predetermined amounts of industrial products. In reality, the system did not operate as it should have done. On the one hand, the state organizations were not capable of meeting the supply obligations for the benefit of the peasants. On the other hand, the procurement organizations often demanded deliveries larger than those laid down in the *kontraktatsiya*. This situation resulted from a policy which itself was a consequence of the class offensive conducted against the peasantry with a view to maximizing accumulation by the state.

The statistics allow an evaluation very approximate of the balance by value of these exchanges. Thus between 1929 and 1931 (when the amounts of agricultural products purchased by the state increased massively, the volume of deliveries of industrial products for consumption by the agricultural population fell by 10 percent, it fell by about another 25 percent between 1930 and 1932.¹ These figures underestimate moreover the drop in the supply to the peasants of industrial consumer goods for they take no account of the disappearance of the rural artisans who, up to the end of NEP, possessed a substantial part of the products needed by the peasants.

Although the peasantry delivered more and more products and received less and less, its monetary resources fluctuated because the prices which the state gave paid for what it more or less stationary (they even fell in 1931) and increased once slightly afterwards, while the prices at which peasants bought industrial products from the state increased substantially.²

In 1931 measures were taken to increase the monetary resources of the peasantry. They consisted mainly in authorizing peasants and *kolkhozniks* to sell directly a part of their production (which for the *kolkhozniks* came from their plots and from their individual livestock) to consumers and at free prices which were usually higher than those paid by the state. In October 1931 the *kolkhozes* and the *sovkhozes* were similarly authorized to make such sales so long as they had fulfilled

animal products. But the prices at which peasants bought industrial products increased substantially, for example, the price of cotton goods increased by eight times between 1928 and 1937.

In sum, after the beginning of the 1930s there was a serious exacerbation of the living conditions of the peasantry thanks to the direct exploitation of forced labor on the collective farms and to indirect exploitation exercised through exchange and price movements.

The intensified exploitation of the peasantry entailed a series of consequences. It kept at a very low level the income that the members of agricultural artels drew from their labor within the latter.³² Closely related to this, it had the effect of allocating a decisive role to the economic activities of the farm in production. Such family activities in no way had an 'accessory' nature (as kolkhoz fiction claims) because it was indispensable for the existence of the kolkhoz system.

(4) Observations about the financial contribution of agriculture to accumulation by the state

The indirect forms of exploitation of the peasants allowed the state to draw from agriculture a "financial contribution" and accumulate much more than would appear at first sight. This emerges not only from the relative development of prices for agricultural and industrial products, but also from an examination of the fiscal mechanisms which underlay this development during the 1930s. Agriculture therefore played a considerable role in the indirect financing of state accumulation. In fact, in the state budget—through which passed the monetary flows which financed state accumulation—the place was occupied in the receipts column by the turnover tax. In 1937, for example, this tax produced about 75 percent of the budget receipts and it affected essentially agricultural products, including those of the food industry. The rate at which these products were taxed was particularly high: 33 to 65 percent of the selling price for vegetable oils, from 37 to 87 percent of the selling price for meat. But the largest part of the fiscal receipts coming from agricultural products (40 percent of these receipts) related to taxes on bread and bakery products.³³

Finally, bearing in mind the fall in essential agricultural production, the new relationships of domination and exploitation to which the peasants were subjected, and the concrete and indirect forms in which this exploitation was clothed, it can be seen that collectivization had catastrophic effects for the great mass of the peasantry. The low standard of life of the kolkhozniks is a consequence of the course followed by agricultural production and the exactions to which it was subject. Nevertheless, this low standard of living also resulted from the very working of the kolkhoz system.

Notes

1. Academy of Sciences of the USSR, *Political Economy* (London, 1957) pp. 464-65.
2. The division of the rural population between these different forms of agricultural activity has been dealt with above.
3. Academy of Sciences, *Political Economy* p. 469.
4. See above, p. 471.
5. See for example, the description of the Soviet agricultural situation in 1937 in *History of the Communist Party of the USSR* (B) p. 345-36.
6. In the following pages reference will be made primarily to physical unit statistics which are more "reliable" than those based on prices. Special care will be made of recent statistics. In fact the latter show that some of the pre-war statistics partly obscure the depth of the catastrophe that collectivization, from above heaped on agricultural production. However, even recent statistics, when they are in terms of value, the use of allegedly constant "prices", can make to hide the scale of this disaster.
7. As time passed the agricultural crisis became more fully that of "socialized" agriculture properly described. Thus in 1940 the kolkhozes and sovkhozes disposed respectively of 8.3 and 8.8 percent of the sown area, which had grown to 150.4 million hectares compared to 112 million in 1928. See *Nakh* 1958g pp. 385-87 and p. 396; also *Sotsenstokheskoye stroitel'stvo SSSR* (Moscow 1936), p. 278.
8. This figure is given by M. Lewin in "Taxing Land: Soviet Policies of Agriculture, Procurement before the War," a contribution to S. Abramsky ed. *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr* (London, 1974), p. 30. This is a round estimate; the most often-quoted figure is in fact 83.5 million tons.
9. These figures are from the following sources: for 1930 and 1939 see preceding note; for 1936 the Soviet statistics covering the grain harvest are extremely confused. They hide a catastrophic situation. The figure of 56.1 million tons (an optimistic estimate) has been calculated from the difference between the average production officially announced for 1933

21. These percentages are calculated from Barrow's data, taking into account the estimations made by J. F. Barrow in *The Soviet Rural Communities*, p. 20.
22. Between 1926 and 1931 the prices that the state paid for agricultural products delivered as the planned procurement passed from an index of 100 to 118.6 before falling back to 109.3 in 1932. Meanwhile the index of prices at which the state sold industrial consumer products moved from 100 to 186.1 in 1931 and to 206.3 in 1932. See J. F. Barrow, *Soviet Rural Communities*, p. 50.
23. KPSS (1953), Vol. 2 pp. 874ff.
24. B. Kartbay, *Les Marchés paysans* in *TRSS* (Paris 1946), p. 123.
25. See above p. 147 and *Pravda*, May 7 and 11, 1932.
26. Except for industrial crops like for example sugar beets and cotton.
27. In 1932 the index of prices for agricultural products and on the 'Food market' reached 300% (1928 = 100). See J. F. Barrow's contribution in *The Soviet Rural Community*, p. 50.
28. On these various points see B. Kartbay, *Les Marchés*, p. 131.
29. See J. Miller ed. *The Soviet Rural Communities*, p. 56.
30. (On average a quintal of rice brought 6.02 rubles in 1930 and 6.10 in 1939) (See Kartbay, *Les Marchés*, p. 133 and also A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 243).
31. A. Nove see above p. 143. See also the data on p. 85 of the *New Document of Economics at Pouchkov 1947*. In addition it will be noted that the price at which peasants and townsmen sold their produce on the free market which had been multiplied by 30 between 1928 and 1932 (the amount offered being then minimal) fell by more than a half between 1933 and 1937. From 1937 to 1946 the evolution of prices of sale and purchase did not improve the lot of the backhoe peasantry quite the contrary in fact (See J. Miller ed. *The Soviet Rural Communities*, p. 56).
32. This question will be dealt with later.
33. This would not be apparent if only direct taxation of agriculture was examined: that is the product of the agricultural tax. For example, in 1937 this tax (then fixed by the net income of farms) provided only one percent of budgetary receipts. This percentage is calculated from Soviet sources in L. Bettelheim, *La Planification soviétique*, pp. 13 and 17.
34. The size of the commercial receipts and fiscal receipts obtained by the state through the products extracted for practically nothing from the peasantry was considerable. Thus in 1933, 34 the price at which the state bought wheat from the grain areas was from 4.2 to 5.4 kopeks per bush, while wheat flour was sold in state shops for 15 to 60 kopeks against ration coupons and for from 4 to 5 rubles off-ration. For potatoes the prices were as follows: Purchase at 1 to 4 kopeks and as ration at 20 to 30 kopeks, sold off-ration at 1.2 to 2 rubles. See R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 92).

The kolkhoz system

THE new social relationships which developed during the period of 'collectivization' were much more complex than official accounts suggest. To grasp this complexity it is necessary to examine not only the working of simply the isolated kolkhoz (which is a false abstraction, but rather that of the *kolkhoz system*).

True, this system included the kolkhoz (the "collective farm") but it also included the Party and state organs which managed the kolkhozes, and the so called 'individual holdings' of the kolkhozniks, from which the latter drew a great part, and sometimes the essential part, of their subsistence.

At the end of the 1930s the kolkhoz on average disposed of more than 600 hectares of cultivated land (against 72 in 1928) on which worked about 80 kolkhoznik families. The work was organized in an 'industrial' way, following capitalist forms of the organization of labor in teams and in specialized brigades put under the authority of supervisory personnel. The work was *collective* and was carried out with the help of a certain number of machines. However in 1940 the level of mechanization in agriculture was still quite low, scarcely more than two tractors, on average, per kolkhoz. Additionally, these tractors, like the other major equipment, did not belong to the kolkhozes but to an external organization, the M.S. which operated them according to directives coming from the managing economic and political organizations. Consequently the

immediate producers were reduced to the role of simple executors placed in the production process organized by those who had effective possession of the means of production—that is, the cadres of the kolkhoz and even more, the cadres of the bodies directing the kolkhoz system.

6. The "individual auxiliary economy"

The term 'individual auxiliary economy' is misleading. It suggests that the latter was only a simple appendage of the collective economy. But it was much more than that. It was an essential part of the kolkhoz system without which the latter could not survive. Also the term 'individual' obscured another reality, namely the *familial* nature of the plot and the livestock which kolkhoz households could have at their disposal. So it is better to talk about the 'individual holdings' of the kolkhozniks.

At the level of the work process, this type of agriculture depended on a *division of labor* limited to the family, and essentially to the nuclear family constituted by a couple and their young children. In certain cases, and in certain regions (for example in Central Asia) members of the wider family could participate in this division of labor. The size that this familial agriculture could attain was reduced by regulatory measures. The latter also fixed the conditions under which the products of the individual holding could be sold on the free market (called the "kolkhoz market").

The history of this regulation is complicated. Only some features, which illuminate the conditions under which the kolkhoz system was developed, will be reviewed here. At the beginning of collectivization from above, in 1929, some attempts at integral collectivization were made which would not have left any auxiliary economy. However from 1930 it was officially acknowledged that, given the way in which kolkhozes operated, and the obligations to which they were subjected, the auxiliary economy was a vital necessity. It was to help supply the kolkhozniks and also the towns.

(a) *The plot, family livestock,
and the kolkhoz market*

On March 2, 1933 Proysa published an obligatory draft statute for kolkhozes. This statute attributed the land of the kolkhoz to the kolkhoz (which was required to take the farm as an asset—in other words, of the traditional kassan corporation)—but it left to the kolkhozniks the personal possession of a house, individual plot, a few fowl and some domestic livestock.²

(On October 30, 1933 a decision of the Plenum of the CPSU devoted to Soviet trade and the improvement of the workers' food supply" allowed—under certain conditions—kolkhozniks to sell their production directly to consumers. The attempt gave the state a complete hold on town-country exchanges (which had been intended in 1930-31) was abandoned at the time³ for the authorities acknowledged that if they were to take at a low price a large part of the products produced by the kolkhozes, they had not only to authorize the auxiliary market but allow the kolkhozniks to sell some products on the free market from which they would draw that minimum of dollars receipts that the "collective economy" was then incapable of securing them.

In relation to the initial intentions of integral collectivization—and the ban on all direct sales by kolkhozniks of their production, the real change of direction was dated 1932 when the kolkhoz market was officially re-established. The receipts drawn by the peasants and by the kolkhozes from sales on the kolkhoz market grew rapidly and even more after a decree of May 10, 1932 allowed the very heavy turnover tax which had been applied to these sales in 1931.

Nevertheless it must be noted that right up to the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-7) the right of kolkhozniks to have their own individual livestock was far from being respected by local authorities who were still prepared to completely expropriate peasants, who had been later to slaughter their livestock. Thus, on February 12, 1933 Stalin had to put in a few words at the congress of kolkhoz stock-keepers. His conclusion had a tone of alarm (may this be declared).

It was not so long ago that there existed a small misunderstanding between the Soviet government and the kolkhozniks.⁶ It concerned the cow. But now the business has been settled and the misunderstanding has been put right. We have achieved a situation in which the majority of kolkhoz households already have one cow. Another year or two and there will not be a single kolkhoznik without his own cow.⁷

In reality what the kolkhozniks obtained through a series of decrees⁸ was not only the right to possess one cow but of having an individual livestock establishment: one cow, two calves, a sow and piglets, ten sheep (maximum an unlimited number of fowl) and twenty beehives (at most) and in addition a certain area of cultivable land which could be as much as a quarter or half hectare, and sometimes even more.⁹

In spite of the limitations placed on their size, individual livestock and plots tended to play an important part while being the source of deep contradictions within the kolkhoz system.¹⁰

On several occasions these contradictions and the attempt of the authorities to "control" the totality of agricultural production gave rise to "offensives" against private activities.¹¹ Generally, such "offensives" had the effect of temporarily lowering agricultural production, making the food supply of the towns more precarious.

These "offensives" reveal the desire of the authorities, and of the exploiting class whose interests they defended, to subdue as far as possible the kolkhozniks and to put their hand on the greater part of the products of their labour. The "offensives" may also be explained by the circumstance that the non-collective activities of the kolkhozniks (and to a lesser extent the sovkhos workers who also had obtained the right to cultivate a little land and raise some animals)¹² tended to take up a large part of the labour which they performed and were the origin of a quite large part of their income.

In sum, just before the war the plots of the kolkhozniks were in general smaller than authorized. In 1948 each peasant family on average disposed only of 0.44 hectares. 10.5 percent of kolkhoz households exceeded the authorized area. Individual

holdings at this period accounted for only 1.9 percent of the sown area and not all of them had the number of animals to which they had a right.¹²

*b) Income received by the
kolkhozniks as producers in possession
of an "individual holding"*

The very small measured size of individual holding operations and the "artistic" character of the production process, based on their using ploughs, hoes, sickles, etc., were partly compensated by intensive and careful labour which was above all provided by women.¹³

The small amount of published information as well as its omissions and contradictions make it very difficult to estimate in money terms the receipts drawn by the kolkhozniks from their plots and from their individual livestock raising. However, this information is sufficient to suggest that at the end of the 1930s the tiny "artisanal" agricultural operations of the kolkhozniks provided them with an income equivalent to more than that which they obtained from the "collectivized" land.¹⁴

This result was all the more remarkable in that the "artisanal" land was cultivated at a cost well above the "collectivized" farms and that they covered only 3.9 percent of the kolkhoz sown area. Despite this in 1937 the individual operations provided about 21.5 percent of agricultural production in 1938 they provided the greater part of the monetary receipts of an average kolkhoz family and the greater part of animal feed, potatoes, fruits and vegetables. With the exception of kolkhozniks were for the most part supplied by the kolkhozniks.

In 1937 individual livestock operations provided 1.4 percent of the milk, 70.9 percent of the meat, 70.4 percent of the skins and 43 percent of the wool.¹⁵ At that time animals belonging to kolkhozniks formed the major part of the total livestock.

In order to evaluate the economic role of individual operations on the part of the kolkhozniks it should also be noted that the monetary receipts of these latter during the 1930s came largely (75-85 percent) of receipts from sales on the free market.

of the prices there were several times higher than those paid by the state.¹⁰ Most of the products sold there came from individual agriculture, with only a small fraction coming from distributions in kind made by the kolkhozes. However, from 1947 the production from plots and from family livestock was subjected to increased state exactions, which tended to reduce the share of monetary receipts coming from sales on the free market of products from individual holdings, even though the reduction in amounts sold was partly compensated by a rise of the prices at which agricultural products could be sold.

Generally speaking, the "familial micro-agriculture" of the kolkhozniks played a decisive role simultaneously in the supplying of citizens the daily subsistence of families belonging to collective farms, and the obtaining by these families of a monetary income. True, the products of collective activities were indispensable for the provisioning of kolkhozniks, but the resources that they drew from these activities seem to have been not much more than a mere complement to the incomes coming from familial agriculture.

The output of familial agriculture partly entered the channels of trade through the kolkhoz market, or through transactions made with state commercial organizations and co-operatives. In addition, familial agriculture bore the weight of considerable series of various taxes. Despite the pressure thus exercised by the state on extracting a surplus from familial agriculture, the latter above all covered the needs of the peasant family, thus considerably reducing the expense of the reproduction of its labor force and by the kolkhoz and enabled the latter to be subordinated to the maximum extent to the demands of the state and to accumulation.

II. The kolkhoz

(a) Relationships of production and domination within the kolkhoz

The kolkhoz which emerged from collectivization from above¹¹ was characterized by the existence within it of a marked

hierarchical structure: a small number of managers assigned the direct workers and means of work to definite tasks (and the latter in principle corresponded to orders coming from organizations placed "above" the kolkhozi). The direct producers were thus reduced to the role of simple executors placed at the lower level of a structure in which certain features of the capitalist organization of labor were combined with military command forms: this encouraged the reproduction of a particular type of agrarian despotism. In the given ideological and political conditions, this structure was adequate for the extraction of a surplus which was especially large.

The great majority of the lower kolkhozniks were entrusted mainly with work that was manual and unskilled, and among them women were the majority.²⁰ They had particularly arduous routines, being at the lowest income level (excluding those camp workers).

In addition, kolkhozniks did not have the same rights as the Soviet citizens. One might say that the kolkhoz population "had only duties" towards the managing organs of the kolkhozes and towards the state which, so far as the kolkhoz population was concerned, had only rights. Various authorities took upon themselves the power to take back from the lower kolkhoznik one or another material advantage which had been originally officially recognized as his in writing, and in practice he could not protest: if he did it would bring him more trouble than it was worth. To justify their behavior the authorities did not hesitate to claim that "what is good for the state (or the kolkhoz) is good for the kolkhoznik."²¹ For example, the novelist Sholokhov could put the following words in the mouth of the Party official:

With us there is no difference between the interests of the kolkhozniks and the interests of the state in general. If the state takes grain to satisfy some need or other, the satisfying of this need is equally in the interest of the peasants.²²

In fact, by reason of the very over-exploitation that they endured, the kolkhozniks were "deprived" of some part of the rights recognized by the Constitution — and which were

hardly respected for other citizens — were quite simply directed toward the kolkhozniks were economically and politically persecuted against, although Art. 10 '23 of the Constitution prohibits any discrimination between different citizens.

1. Working conditions of the kolkhozniks

At the center of the discrimination which affected ordinary kolkhozniks were obviously their working conditions. These conditions were fixed in a mainly arbitrary way by the administrative organs of the kolkhoz. By decision of these organs each kolkhoznik offering himself for manual labor was bound under the authority of a *brigadier*. The latter assigned his daily tasks and fixed the time limit in which they had to be done. Part of these tasks corresponded to norms fixed in advance by the technical services. Ordinary kolkhozniks had control neither of the way in which these norms were fixed nor of the way the authorities evaluated the success rate with which they had accomplished the imposed norms. However, it was on the basis of such norms and such evaluations that the remuneration of each kolkhoznik was fixed.

From 1933 the central authorities multiplied the norms. For example, a law of February 28, 1933 fixed 35 norms for field work. In 1934 new tasks were normed. In 1940, 204 tasks had norms. These norms were established by research institutes. Their application in the large required the participation of a growing number of brigadiers and supervisors. It was required as an argument of the accounting establishment of the kolkhozes. The norms applied in the different kolkhozes were (nominally) adapted to local conditions. In practice this was far from being the case, for pressures of all kinds were exercised in the way in which the norms were adopted and applied.

The extension of this system did not give the kolkhozniks the advantage of a fixed wage. At the same time it did impose a fixed quota of work, analogous to that which stemmed from the wage per piece which according to Marx is the form of wage most suited to the capitalist mode of production, a quota that is not adequate for capitalist control of the labor force and surplus value. The discrimination suffered by the kolkhozniks

and the contradictions of the kolkhoz system manifested themselves here in the circumstance that the system had imposed on them a form of exploitation which was harsher even though they were not wage earners.

The discrimination which affected kolkhozians was justified itself in the circumstance that they were not wage earners. The explanation on the pretext that they were cooperative workers. Theoretically the discrimination of the kolkhoz administration could be corrected by the general assembly of kolkhozians. In reality they could not do so. The courts did not interfere in the internal affairs of the kolkhoz. The kolkhoz management functioned like a court of justice. It even took decisions that frequently violated ordinary laws including decisions having a political character. It was not subordinated to any authority. It was more so far as the kolkhozians were concerned. It was not a judge and interested party just as the kolkhoz management.

The workers of the cooperative farm could not do so. The evaluation by kolkhoz management of the way in which they had fulfilled the work plan was not subject to any appeal. The kolkhoz management could only intervene to require the kolkhoz to pay a kolkhozian a sum which was due to him by a decision already taken by the kolkhoz.

The discriminatory situation in which the kolkhozians found themselves placed included many aspects. First, they could not be nationalized, because they were not wage earners; they had no rights to social security. For this reason, they received no state aid or housing. They were not allowed to engage in various lucrative works (for the upkeep of their farms which did not hinder other citizens, the price of their produce in the kolkhoz was higher than in the towns). Above all, they had no right to a fixed wage because the wage which was distributed to them by the kolkhoz was a bonus on what remained for distribution after the kolkhoz had allocated its resources to its kind of uses imposed by the state in granting with the procurements and the compulsory deliveries which went to the state and had absolute priority.

In a situation in which wage earners (wage earners in the towns) could be subjected to taxes by the state, the kolkhozians could be subjected to taxes by the kolkhoz.

management and have to pay "indemnities" for damage that they might have caused; the amount of these damage payments was moreover, calculated by the kolkhoz management.²

In sum, the derisory "remuneration" which came to the kolkhoznik for his work in the "collective economy" and the uncertain nature of this "remuneration" had as a consequence the fact that this work constituted forced labor analogous to the corvée, the *barshchina* once owed to the feudal seigneur. Moreover, it is significant that it became necessary to fix for kolkhozniks a definite number of compulsory work days to be contributed to the "collective" economy because the majority did their work in the kolkhoz with great reluctance and preferred to devote themselves to their individual holdings, a circumstance about which the Soviet leaders often complained.³

In January 1934, at the Seventeenth Congress of the Party, Andrejev (entrusted with agricultural problems in the CC) acknowledged that some kolkhozniks refused to work regularly on the "collective" land. At first these refusals led to sanctions imposed by the kolkhoz chairman. In May and November 1934 regulatory action was taken by the government to impose rather more strictly an obligation to work on the kolkhozniks. The annual minimum number of obligatory work days was then fixed between 80 and 100 days per year. In 1942 this minimum number was fixed at 100-150 days per year (order of April 17, 1942).

(2) Quasi-state serfdom

In total, the mass of immediate producers who had been placed in the "collective economy" were in a situation resembling that of state serfs subject to obligatory labor to meet arbitrary decisions by those who managed the kolkhozes and were only exceptionally able to appeal to the "higher organs." Moreover, they were forbidden in practice to quit their kolkhoz. They were really a lot like the serfs of the Middle Ages. A peasant had been attached to the soil, or the serf to the lord's land.

The ban on a kolkhoznik leaving the kolkhoz unless he had permission from the authorities (which was also the case for

erts) took the Russian peasant back not only to before (before but even to before the Stolypin reform (which had established the exceptional status of peasants)³⁰ and, still worse, to before the law of February 18 (March 3) 1861 which—with many details and limitations—freed the peasants from serfdom made them “free” and removed them from the law of the police and the justice of the landlord.

This backward step resulted from no law but from the *kolkhoz* statutes which did not allow the *kolkhoznik* to leave permanently his residence and his place of work except after obtaining the permission of the *kolkhoz*, which meant in reality of the *kolkhoz* management.

Admittedly the *kolkhoz* statutes indicated that the *kolkhoznik* “could leave the *kolkhoz*,” but as they did not specify in what conditions he could make use of this “right,” the latter depended in practice on the “goodwill” of the *kolkhoz* authorities—in other words on the judgement that they made about the effects of a departure, on the sympathy or antipathy that the managers of the *kolkhoz* felt toward the applicant, the “strings” he could pull among these “superior” authorities, and local custom (which could always be revoked).

The need to obtain this permission in order to quit the *kolkhoz* was retained up to the 1970s. In the words of the Soviet peasant, this permission (which from 1942 enabled an internal passport to be obtained) was commonly described by the term “*svobodnaya*” (‘emancipation’ which at the time of serfdom was the name of the document given to the peasants by the landlord who freed them).

It is typical that the present status of the *kolkhoznik* gave him no treatment in the formalities of exit from the *kolkhoz* but specified nothing—and for good reason—about the “right” of departure.³¹ Soviet authors who have studied these questions show that even when a *kolkhoz* woman married a town-dweller she had to obtain the right to leave it from the *kolkhoz* management. Similarly a *kolkhoznik* whose daughter married in the town could not in his turn go and live with her without being so authorized. In general, permission to leave was not granted (and this was not a “right”) except when the *kolkhoznik* had obtained a contract with another enterprise, and accommodation.³²

A kolkhoznik might possibly abandon the kolkhoz. He was not expelled. He lost his house and his expulsion was written in his documents, which put him in a precarious and dangerous situation. People then said that he had obtained his "red" house - a personal identification document of tsarist times which carried details of the bearer's position, under which he was no longer a kolkhoznik or worker or employee, being regarded as an independent peasant and liable to high taxes. He was in fact directly threatened by various repressive measures. During the 1930s this did not prevent many kolkhozniks leaving in this way. At first they worked occasionally, sleeping in railway stations or in huts, and they moved around without being "registered" at the police station. Some were eventually arrested for "vagrancy" while others ended up finding a "rescue" house and accommodation.²⁴

The difficulties of those who left without being officially "free" were all the greater because they possessed neither the "internal passport" which was usually required nor the "work book". These two "documents" were distributed to town-dwellers during the 1930s but were not given to the peasants. The introduction of the "internal passport" was merely a feature of tsarism abolished by the October Revolution. The tsarist regime likewise had denied peasants an internal passport.

It should be emphasized that it was not only the "free" kolkhoznik who was attached to the soil. This attachment extended in reality to the members of his family although in principle membership of the kolkhoz was "voluntary" and voluntary in practice. At the end of the 1930s the new "free" kolkhozniks family were "automatically" entered in the lists of kolkhozniks. This practice continued after the war despite the protests of certain kolkhozniks who wanted their children to be attached to the kolkhoz only at their personal request. These protests by kolkhozniks were never repeated in spite of the legal texts by the executive farm chairman who kept a register of kolkhozniks handed to each year to the "register of souls" which was kept before the abolition of serfdom in 1861.²⁵

The attachment of the kolkhozniks to the soil put them in a situation of total subordination to the organs of the kolkhoz.

management and it had an effect on the conditions under which the kolkhozniks worked and were remunerated.

Although the management of the kolkhoz could act at its own discretion in relations with its kolkhozniks, the same could not be said about its relations with superior bodies. For example, industrial enterprises which wanted to recruit manpower in the countryside could be authorized by the appropriate central offices to make agreement with kolkhoz managers. These managers usually did not wish to be deprived of labour power but it was difficult for them to escape from 'organized recruitment' when the industrial enterprises were supported by the higher authorities. It sometimes happened that the collective farm managers demanded that their kolkhoz be compensated for the 'loss of manpower' which was imposed on them in this way. This 'compensation' was levied on the wages of the kolkhozniks sent to work in industry. Popularly this levy was described by the term *obrok* which evoked the dues that the serf had to pay to his landlord when the latter allowed him to leave for the town.¹⁷

In sum, during the 1930s millions of peasants nevertheless left the countryside, because they took advantage of the new organization in the early days, or they had been excluded or ejected from the kolkhoz, or they had taken their 'voluntary break' or they had been recruited in the framework of *orgnabor*. For the tens of millions who remained attached to their kolkhoz, this obviously did not change the situation of quasi-state serfdom in which they found themselves.

(3) Some remarks about the return to forms of quasi-serfdom during the 1930s

Marx observed that,

The tradition of all past generations weighs like an albatross upon the brain of the living. A whole people that imagines it has imparted to itself accelerated powers of motion through a revolution suddenly finds itself transferred back to a dead epoch and [then] there turn up again the old calendar, the old names, the old edicts...¹⁸

In a certain way this is what happened to the Soviet peasants during the 1930s. Their new masters really covered the old instruments of coercion. True they dressed them in new words, but the peasants were not deceived and gave them their old names.

But it should be emphasized too, the return to relationships of dependence and exploitation, the reversal of the relationship as appropriate to perform it, no way, indicates that this return was purely and simply to the old social relationships and the old social relationships, in particular, these points must be kept in view.

1. The kollektiv was neither a "land's domain" nor a large landed property, what it produced and the use made of what it produced were determined by the requirements of administration of the state or society, requirements which were mediated by the Party and by the state.

2. The existence of relationships like those of serfdom which typified the kollektiv does not mean that the kollektivists escaped capitalist exploitation. These relationships indicate that such exploitation bore on them in a specific form. Such a situation is not exceptional. The independent peasants of western capitalist countries are likewise subject under one or the form to the exploitation of capital. It was the same in the 19th century for the slaves on the plantations of the American southern states or in China and still today, for example, for the Chinese immigrants to the Dominican Republic, where they are "attached" to their employers by debts that they are unable to repay.

The work process within the kollektiv was mainly a repetition (even a repetition) of the capitalist work process, with its forms of division and specialization. It tended to concentrate at one pole what Marx called "the universal forces of production" (even though the latter were extremely weak) and to deprive the ordinary worker of any initiative. It even tended to expatriate from the old peasants their knowledge and experience. Aided by the general indifference to work, it succeeded here quite well: the peasants' rich experience, already degraded, was replaced only by the unrelatable knowledge of experts. The results are still visible today.

3. In the social structure as a whole the kollektiv managers in no way occupied the same place as the old landowners.

or feudal lords. They were appointed and dismissed by political chiefs placed above them, and they were responsible in the latter for the achievement of a certain number of tasks. In fact, they were subordinate agents of society scale tasks connected with the extraction of surplus labor and the accumulation of surplus value.

III. The kolkhoz managerial stratum and its placement in the general social structure

According to the kolkhoz statutes, the supreme directing organ was the general assembly of kolkhozniks. In theory, the assembly could annul unjustified decisions by the chairman, vote for obligatory resolutions, adopt or modify the kolkhoz budget and remove the chairman. In practice the kolkhozniks could not exercise any of these rights except in very exceptional cases (in particular when they were impelled to do so by the authorities at a higher level). Apart from such cases, kolkhozniks who took the risk of opposing the will of the 'chairman' would appear to be suspect and rotten elements and would be exposed to severe troubles and even sanctions.

In actuality the kolkhoz chairmen were, therefore, not subject to any control from below. They were appointed from above, they were "simple administrators" who often did not call the general assemblies and the control organs, or they only so as to have their decisions 'ratified'. In popular language they were often referred to as the kolkhoz directors. Their power was much more than that of the local soviets, which usually went along with the measures they took. Their authority over the kolkhozniks moreover much exceeded that of the director of an enterprise over "his" workers, since the kolkhozniks depended on their managers not only during work, but during their daily life, for example for the upkeep of their horses, the preservation or reduction of their individual plots and even problems of food supply.²⁰

However, management of the kolkhoz was not carried out by its chairman alone but by a *managing stratum*, whose career depended on Party and state decisions. The existence of this

stratum limited the claims of the chairman to exercise the powers of a 'sole director' because its members could review the 'decisions' of the chairman invoking superior state interests. In this way the state administrative nature of the kolkhoz was reinforced.

The existence of a kolkhoz managerial stratum met other needs besides that of ensuring the supervision of the kolkhoz chairman for there were other means of supervising him.

One of the functions of the kolkhoz was to transform agricultural work into an enterprise of industrial character, developing a new division of labour and new styles of cultivation, increasing the use of mechanical and chemical techniques, rationalizing its operations and improving its administration with paper bookkeeping. This nature of the kolkhoz required the presence of a variegated body of specialists. The latter performed quasi-managerial tasks and watched over the transformation of the conditions of production so as to allow an increase of production and of profitability. Insofar as the cadres charged with these tasks succeeded in actually lacking them, their activity tended to transform the kolkhoz into a state enterprise (a form declared to be superior to the kolkhoz form).

The second essential function performed by the 'collective farms' (a function which predominated throughout the 1930s) was to ensure at any price the satisfaction of the state's immediate needs for agricultural products, the latter to be obtained at the lowest possible monetary cost. Above all, it was a question of ensuring the procurement of grain and to that end of introducing in the collective farms a 'factory discipline' at a time when the material basis and the ideological conditions necessary for a relatively 'flexible' exercise of this discipline were lacking. Hence the role played by naked repression in the operation of the kolkhozes and the multiplication of supervisory and control tasks assumed by the kolkhoz managerial stratum and by the little bosses placed under its orders.

The increase of supervisory tasks thereby expressed the subordination of the kolkhoz cadres to the general demand for capital accumulation which the departments of state were striving for. To cope with its many tasks the kolkhoz managerial

stratum took the form of a group that was complex and hierarchical. It included elements that were genuinely dominant, the nucleus of a new agricultural and rural bourgeoisie, and elements that were relatively dominated, forming an agricultural petty bourgeoisie. The lower ranks of the latter included kolkhozniks occupying more or less privileged positions.

A detailed analysis of the personnel of the kolkhoz managerial stratum and of its characteristics would require an excessively long treatment. The discussion will therefore be limited to certain general points.

For a start it should be noted that toward the end of the 1930s the kolkhoz managerial stratum was still relatively small. At that time there were about 240,000 kolkhozes.⁴⁰ The latter (according to figures quoted in 1939 referring to 1937) had 582,000 kolkhoz chairmen, assistant chairmen, and managers of animal breeding farms. To these agricultural cadres must be added 80,000 agronomists and 90,000 other agricultural technical staff (but by no means all of these worked entirely within a kolkhoz) making a total of 752,000 in these categories, which is a small figure for a kolkhoz population of more than 80,000,000.⁴¹ To these cadres, who constituted the hierarchical summit of the kolkhoz strata, were added the intermediate cadres, mainly brigade and team leaders.⁴²

Most of these intermediate cadres had no particular technical knowledge. As A. Arutyunyan remarked in its training "the kolkhoz intelligentsia" was hardly distinguished from the mass of kolkhozniks,⁴³ of which in 1939 almost a quarter was completely illiterate and only 17 per cent had finished the seven-year school.⁴⁴ The cadres therefore fulfilled essentially command, supervisory and control functions, while there was a shortage of specialists (for example, of tractor drivers and agronomists) bearing in mind the requirements of the large-scale mechanization that had been forecast for the kolkhozes. To the cadres entrusted with command and supervisory functions should be added those entrusted with administrative functions, mainly bookkeepers. However, the command functions went to the kolkhoz chairmen, their deputies, and the brigade and team leaders, some of whom were in the kolkhoz council of administration. These command functions were combined, as we shall see, with those expressed by "party and

state organizations, for these organizations constantly intervened in kolkhoz activity

The totality of the operating conditions of the kolkhozes, their manner of administration and the exactions that the state imposed on them determined the low level of kolkhozniks incomes and the inequalities which influenced their distribution.

III. The incomes of kolkhozniks and kolkhoz cadres

Before examining what incomes were received by the kolkhozniks from the "collective farm" it is necessary to give an indication of how these revenues were fixed. To do this, certain "rules" of the kolkhoz system should be recalled

(a) *The composition of incomes distributed by the kolkhozes, and how they were divided*

Incomes of the kolkhozniks depended on the incomes of their kolkhoz. The latter in their turn depended on a multiplicity of elements over which the management of each kolkhoz (and, even more so, the kolkhozniks) had usually little influence: the scale of the different types of production mainly determined by the production plans and the means put at the disposition of the kolkhoz; the exactions that the state levied on this production, the prices which might be paid for part of the output taken by the state. All this determined for a given year the *gross annual receipts of each kolkhoz*.

However, what would be distributed to the kolkhozniks did not directly depend on the annual gross receipts of their kolkhozes, but rather from what was left after other exactions had been levied, leaving the *balance of receipts payable to the kolkhozniks*.

(1) The balance payable to the kolkhozniks

This balance was obtained by deducting from the gross receipts various "external" or "internal" charges. The "external

charges were the payments that the kolchoz had to make to the state treasury or to various state organs (for example, to the Ministry of Agriculture). The internal charges were intended to finance the functioning and accumulation of the kolchoz and its administrative expenses, notably the wages of its leaders. The amount of all these charges depended principally on decisions made by authorities outside the kolchozes. After the kolchoz had dealt with all its external charges (at a time when gross receipts were low because of agricultural crisis, the deliveries made to the state and the prices that were paid to the producers for agricultural products), the balance remaining for distribution to its members remained. It was offered either in kind, or in money.⁴⁰ It was divided on the basis of the "labor-day" unit of account.

(2) Bookkeeping in "labor-days" or *trudodni* and production norms

Throughout the year the work of each *trudobnik* was measured in units of account known as "labor-days" or *trudodni*. One unit of account corresponded to the achievement of a certain task. However, according to the nature of the achievement, one work-day entailed the attribution of a smaller or greater number of *trudodni*. For a piece of work which was regarded as "easy" a work-day could only represent 1.25 *trudodni*, whereas for work described as "difficult" it represented 1.5 *trudodni*. This principle assumed that the different items of work were classified according to categories. In June 1930 a commission tried such a classification. In January 1931, on the basis of recommendations from various institutes, a kolchoz conference classed work into four groups in which the equivalent in *trudodni* of a work-day varied between .75 and 1.5. In 1933, within the framework of the struggle against capitalism, work was divided into seven groups in which the equivalent of a work-day varied from .5 to 2.0 *trudodni*, that is a ratio of 1 to 4.⁴¹

For a *trudobnik* to be considered as having provided one *trudodni*, it was necessary not only that he should have spent a certain time to achieve a certain piece of work, but also quite often that he satisfied certain production norms. The latter proliferated from 1931 at least for manual work.

(3) Calculating the value of a
"trudoden" and individual income

The notion which corresponded to a "trudoden" was not hard to advance. It was calculated by dividing the balance available for distribution in a kollektiv by the total number of "trudodens" provided by all the kolkhozniks of that kolkhoz during the course of the year. This division gave the "effective value" of a "trudoden" for the year in a given kollektiv. As for the individual income estimated to each kolkhoznik by virtue of his "collective work" this was obtained by multiplying the "effective value" of the "trudoden" by the number of "trudodens" which he had provided, adding in some cases a basic wage (larger for the cadres) and bonuses. The income distributed in this way was partly composed of a sum of money and partly of products of the kolkhoz.

This system of distribution was both burdensome and complicated. It subjected the direct producers to a series of rules and norms that were fixed externally. Their effective receipts did not depend, contrary to what was officially declared, on the quantity and quality of their work, but on the way the work of each was evaluated, computed and checked. In addition, what each kolkhoznik received also depended on the work to which he had been allocated and the results achieved by the collective farm. Results on which personal work and the decisions of the kolkhozniks had only nominal influence. Finally, each person received what was due to him only a long time after the work had been done. The work done in the fall remuneration would be received only about a year later, that is, after the harvest had been taken in and all the accounting had been done.

(4) The size of income paid
by the author to the kolkhozniks

The circumstances in which the kolkhozniks "received" the remuneration meant that there was a great differentiation of incomes. Such a differentiation fits in the nature of figures relating to the average income received by kolkhozniks by

value of their collective work. However, this average income is not entirely devoid of interest because it allows a few number of comparisons to be made. We will therefore be giving some facts about this income.

21. The average income received by kolkhozniks from the kolkhoz

Statistics relating to the income of kolkhozniks are especially lacking and contradictory. The figures used here are those quoted by A. Arutunyan.⁴² From these it emerges that in 1940 the average income received by a kolkhoznik from the kolkhoz rose to 12 rubles per month. This figure may be compared with an average income of 22 rubles for a worker in a state factory and of 34 rubles for a wage-earner in industry.⁴³

Even if it were accepted that the income derived from the individual plots and livestock doubled the total income received by the kolkhozniks, this income remained very much lower than the income of an industrial wage-earner. It is quite close to that of a sovkhos wage-earner. The latter usually has at his disposal not an individual plot but a garden which increases his income by several rubles per month.⁴⁴

These figures confirm that in 1940 the collective farms of the kolkhozes was incapable of assuring a living wage for its members. The distributed 'remuneration' did not ensure the reproduction of the work energy of the kolkhozniks and their families, hence the absolute necessity for the cultivation of individual plots for familial livestock raising and for courting sales on the free market. All this is connected with the causes and effects of the peasant resistance to collectivization in the form in which it was carried out.

It may be said that the majority of the kolkhozniks did not even could buy practically nothing, not even industrial products that could be regarded as everyday. This may be confirmed by quoting retail prices of certain consumer goods produced by industry (prices are of 1949 with in parentheses the 1928 prices when available): a meter of cotton cloth was from 1.5 to 2.5 rubles (0.14); a meter of woollen cloth about 1.5 rubles (11.35); a pair of men's leather boots was from 42 to 49 rubles (10.8).⁴⁵

To summarize "collectivization" therefore entailed a considerable reduction in main agricultural production and a collapse of the standard of life of the workers in the countryside. From this it should not be concluded that 'collectivization' was a total failure, because its real objective was not to improve the living conditions of the peasant masses but to create the conditions for their maximal exploitation, so as to assure a rapid expansion of state industry, and in general this objective was achieved.

However this "tree" of average income should not hide the "forest" of income inequalities. The inequalities can be seen as much between kolkhozes as *ins de* each kolkhoz.

2) Income inequalities between kolkhozes

A detailed analysis of income inequalities between kolkhozes would require much time and, moreover, would be difficult to carry out well with the present availability of documentation. We shall therefore limit ourselves to pointing out that the circumstances of several tens of thousands of kolkhozes were such that at the end of the 1930s either they could not pay any monetary remuneration to their members for *trudodni* or the remuneration which they could pay was very inferior to the average payment. Thus in 1939 15,700 kolkhozes had been subjected to such burdens that they were unable to pay any monetary remuneration to their members and 46,000 others could only pay at the most 0.20 rubles per 'work-day' ³¹

(3) Internal inequalities in the kolkhoz

To the inequalities between kolkhozes should be added inequalities internal to each kolkhoz. The latter were the result of a policy whose principal elements were the following:

(a) The distinction made between work of execution and work of direction. The former was remunerated exclusively on the basis of accounting in *trudodni*. The second was remunerated, in addition, by fixed wages and various bonuses.

(b) The fixing of norms that were more or less easy to achieve. Any overfulfilment of the norm created the right to a proportional increase of remuneration. Conversely, in the case of

non-fulfilment of the norm, the remuneration of the kolkhoznik was reduced. This brought about differences in effective remuneration in a range of 5 to 1 between the best paid manual worker and the worst paid. For example the first could earn more than 20 rubles monthly (in an average kolkhoz in 1940) and the second only 4-8 rubles.

c) In 1940 income inequalities between kolkhozniks of the same kolkhoz were made even greater by the establishment of a system of bonuses that were to be added to what was paid by virtue of the *trudodni*.²⁴ These bonuses were paid to members of brigades (or teams) who exceeded their production plan or their productivity plan. As a general rule they were fixed in the form of a payment of a percentage of what was produced above the brigade plan; the distribution of these bonuses was itself subjected to various regulations.²⁵

d) To the inequalities in the remuneration of manual workers connected with the classification of tasks to the fixing of norms more or less easy to fulfil, to the nature of the tasks assigned to the lower kolkhozniks by the chiefs of brigade and teams or by the managers of livestock farms, and to the inequalities due to the bonuses, must be added the inequalities resulting from the higher rates of remuneration a lowest tier of managing personnel of the kolkhozes and the *skladchikov* of the latter. Moreover, part of this remuneration was fixed directly in money terms (which was not the case for the *trudodni* kolkhoznik).

On the eve of World War II the chairman of a kolkhoz received a fixed salary varying from 25-400 rubles monthly (the average being 150 rubles).²⁶ This salary may be compared with the average total remuneration of a kolkhoznik, which as quoted above was 12 rubles. In addition to this salary the chairman received an attribution which varied from 4-6% *trudodni* monthly; however an ordinary kolkhoznik who received no wage—was usually credited with about 15 *trudodni* monthly and often less. This remuneration of kolkhoz chairmen depended on the extent of the cultivated area.

his kolkhoz during the year. In addition to this salary and this attribution of *trudodni* the kolkhoz chairman received a bonus equaling 15-40 percent of his total salary by virtue of an over-fulfilment. Finally, after three years of service he

received a supplementary bonus of 5-15 per cent for each year of service.

Agriculturists, skilled livestock workers, plant and livestock specialists (usually members of the central or administrative) received high contractual credit in *trudodni* and for the over-fulfilment of the plan a bonus equal to 75 per cent of that received by the chairman. The brigadiers and other cadres were automatically credited with 1.5 times the number of *trudodni* achieved by the average *kolkhoznik* plus various bonuses.²⁰ Thus an important part of the available resources of the *kolkhozes* was absorbed by the managing cadres, the specialists, the brigadiers and administrative cadres²¹ which correspondingly reduced the incomes of the 'ordinary' *kolkhozniks*. Without sufficiently detailed and meaningful statistics it is very difficult to make a true comparison between the income inequalities in the countryside at the end of NEP and the end of the 1930s. However, nothing suggests that these inequalities had diminished. What changed were those who benefited from the privileged incomes and the conditions which allowed them to 'thus benefit. It should be noted that in the inequalities in the incomes distributed by the *kolkhozes* should be added other inequalities which increased still more the differentiation of standards of life within the *kolkhozes*.

One of these sources of inequality involved housing. Thus A. Artyur'yan, using an investigation made in 1935 in the village of Terpetovo (situated in the Ukraine in Saporizhche Region), states that there were considerable differences in the content of an *trudodnik's* consumption depending on whether he was used by skilled or unskilled workers. All the accumulation of non-manual skilled workers had private houses whereas 81 per cent of the *kolkhozniks* (districts) had earthen floors.²² Their kitchen dwellings, usually situated in small villages or hamlets, belonged essentially to unskilled manual workers.²³

Another element in the differentiation of living conditions was the use of family agriculture. Thus in 1940 one-third of *kolkhoz* families did not have a cow²⁴ however the cow-possessor of a cow was typical in 92% of a poor peasant household because this animal was essential for providing the peasant household with milk products. The latter were necessary for nourishment and were a source of commodity income.

moreover stable manure was an important factor for the fertility of the plot.

The available information shows that the households of the manual workers were the least favored in questions of livestock raising and plots. Thus at Terpeniye, in 1935, in the kolkhoz sector, 100 percent of "skilled non-manual workers" grew their own crops and had an orchard whereas these percentages fell respectively to 31 and 70 percent for unskilled manual workers.⁹⁰

To summarize the "collective" farm was characterized by a very much polarized social structure by deep economic inequalities, and by relationships of domination that a minority of cadres exercised on the mass of kolkhozniks who were overexploited and literally reduced to short rations. However, these facts should not hide the circumstance that in the overall social structure, the cadres and managers of the kolkhozes were themselves at the bottom of a complex hierarchical system whose pressures forced them to push to a maximum the exploitation of the "ordinary" kolkhozniks. The inferior situation of the cadres of the "collective" farms can be clearly seen when analysing the subordination of the kolkhozes to the requirements of accumulation and state procurement.

V. The subordination of the kolkhozes to the requirements of state accumulation

As is known, the kolkhoz system comprised three elements: familial agriculture, the kolkhoz and the collection of accumulative structures which dominated the kolkhoz and allowed the state to obtain from agriculture a 'tribute' which was regular and as high as possible. The principle function of the system was to contribute to the growth of accumulation in the state sector.

The subordination of the "collective farms" to a collection of administrative structures placed 'above' them was made necessary by the heavy and contradictory obligations which weighed on the kolkhozes. For example, the latter had to assure the state sector of the material means required by the process

of accumulation at the same time they had to "satisfy the needs for extra labor power" which the industrialization process engendered. These two requirements came into contradiction when an excessively intense drainage of labor-power from agriculture to industry disorganized agricultural production and threatened the supply in the state of the material means necessary for accumulation.

These contradictions and the organizational forms through which they were treated during the 1930s are highly significant. They should therefore be examined in order to grasp what exactly was the overall *kolkhoz system*.

(a) The contradictions affecting the size and form of the "tribute" and the place of the kolkhozes in the system of state structures

From the beginning of "collectivization" there could be seen the development of a sharp contradiction between the effort of the state apparatus, seeking to maximize the material supplies currently delivered to the state by the *kolkhozes* and, on the other side, the effort aiming to increase this supply for subsequent years. This contradiction manifested itself in concrete terms during the first half of the 1930s when the "tribute" reached such a size that the standard of living of the *kolkhozniks* drastically fell, which had a negative effect on their labor productivity and even on their numbers, and hence resulted in poorer harvests.⁸¹

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Party gave priority to the maximization of supplies currently extorted from the *kolkhozes* regardless of living conditions and output in the collective farms. To insure respect for this priority, the *kolkhoz* system was subordinated as much as possible to the directives and plans of the state and hence there was an extension of planning downwards, which was extended to the production and distribution of the *kolkhozes*. In this matter the latter were placed virtually on the same footing as the state farms: the Party organization and the state fixed for the *kolkhozes*, just as for the *sovkhozes*, sowing plans for different products, and they installed a control system which aimed to force the *kolkhozes*

to achieve their plans for production and deliveries. The 1930s character of autonomy that the collective farms were said to enjoy thereby became clear from the First Five Year Plan and was confirmed during the Second Plan. What happened during the 1940s clearly reveals, moreover, that the kolхозs were subordinated to the Party, but the form of this subordination varied over time.

At the beginning of collectivization the responsibility of directing and controlling the kolхозs lay principally, at least formally, on the machine and tractor stations (MTS), although the local Party authorities (at district level) were supposed to supervise the operations of the MTS.

There was here a sort of confusion of responsibility, and in January 1933 Plenum of the CC sought to eliminate this by the creation of functional political departments attached to the MTS.²² The political department (*politotdel*) was a Party organization directly subordinated to the CC and not to the secretary of the district committee. Thus the kolхозs were under the direction of the superior Party offices. The head of the *politotdel* was deputy director of the MTS and each *politotdel* was a representative of the CP who therefore also participated in the management of collectivized agriculture.

The representative character of the kolhoz that Stalin had emphasized in 1929 then became especially conspicuous in January 1933 when it took something quite different. He then stated that the Party must now take over the direction of the collective farms, assume responsibility for their work, it must enter into all the details of collective farm life.²³

Thus taking in hand, with the form of constant interference in kolhoz activity, very numerous attempts of kolhoz cadres and managers to achieve results, this led not to a change in the style of kolhoz management, but rather to a strengthening of their subordination. At the beginning of 1934 a decree of March 4 ordered the administrative organs of agriculture, the MTS, and the kolхозs to carry out their operations according to a plan. The government additionally promulgated a model plan for the collective farms and it was stated that this plan should be followed without any deviation. The key element of this plan were the obligatory deliveries to the state. From 1932 these deliveries replaced the old *kontrek* system.

power. The postorder system was not long in showing its faults. It was stated in particular that certain kinds of political experiments had a tendency to "produce" the kulaks even before they had responsibility against the masses to justify it. The delivery plans for grain high cadres of the Party, who began to talk of "anti-state tendencies." Thus, the Decree of November 1934 abolished the postorder system. From the MTS retained a deputy director with especially political responsibilities but he latter did not have his own administrative apparatus and had no longer any part in the power relationship to the local Party organization.

However, the kolkhozes continued to occupy a very important position in the system of administrative structures connected with the management of agriculture and the requisitioning for the state of these agricultural products subject to their delivery. The cadres of the kolkhozes were in an inferior situation within the triangle. They were supposed to manage kolkhoz affairs. This triangle consisted of Party officials governing the farms and the kolkhoz cadres representing the kolkhozes.

The list of governmental organizations to which the activities of the kolkhozes were in practice subordinated was long. The MTS on which each kolkhoz depended for the tractors and works for extensive maintenance of the district soviet, the soviet of the village soviet and the local organizations of the Agricultural Commissariat. These organizations participated in the requisitioning of plans and the checking of their execution and also in the operations the state farms were connected to the MTS and the Agricultural Commissariat. Furthermore, the executive committee of the district soviet reported at the end of each year an annual economic plan by district power which included a plan for the kolkhozes. This plan was transmitted to the latter through the intermediary of the MTS and the local organizations of the Agricultural Commissariat. They managed the kolkhoz tasks in the matter of production, requisitioning of crops, livestock, and the payment of expenses for requisitioning of various operations and materials delivered to the state. The kolkhozes could not refuse to do so since the tasks assigned by the government and since they were in a relationship with the state. The plan of requisitioning of products for the state was a long and complicated process. It was the

kolkhoz could submit proposals to the Party district committee as to the regional administration of the locality.¹² But the kolkhoz could elaborate a plan project for supplementary investments — specifying the material means, human and financial, that its achievement required. This project had to conform to official directives. It was submitted to the local organization of the Agricultural Commissariat which could modify it. The modification of the Commissariat organization required ratification of the kolkhoz plan and it became obligatory. The regulation fixed in this way, resulted in a minimum the freedom of action of the kolkhozes and their managements.

Despite the apparently important role that state organizations, particularly the Agricultural Commissariat, played, was the Party organizations which occupied the commanding position in the management and control of kolkhoz activity. Even though in principle they were not supposed to interfere in production problems in fact they constantly mediated in kolkhoz affairs even in the persons when such interference was not encouraged by the central leadership of the Party, as was the case in 1935 when Stalin emphasized in a speech of February

15 that the kolkhozes should be left with the solution of their own problems and the administrative decisions should not be imposed upon them.

The intervention of the party in kolkhoz affairs was needed with the burdens that weighed upon the kolkhoz economy. To ensure that the intervention of state organizations, the party committee intervened at any moment in economic farm affairs. At the beginning of 1940 the situation was such that Prezda was deploring that "district Party committees (zakonty) had been transformed into a kind of district agricultural office."¹³

The cadres of local Party organizations intervened a great deal in the life of the kolkhozes because they were in principle held responsible for the economic development of their district. Finally, at the beginning of the 1940s, this responsibility was officially placed on them. Firstly, a decree of March 14, 1940 changed the task of the district with organizing crop rotation. Then, at the beginning of 1941, the task of the district was changed with organizing the management of kolkhozes and directly supervising their operation. Party and government directives in the 1930s

Thus there developed an extremely heavy agricultural administration. It was so extensive that on the eve of WWI there were more cadres not belonging to kolkhozes but occupied in the management of the latter than there were kolkhoz chairmen.⁷¹

In these circumstances the kolkhoz was reduced to the role of a simple organ of implementation. It was not only the kolkhoznik who was left aside from all control and organization of production⁷² but also the chairman of the kolkhoz himself who was only the executant of the decisions made by the *raikom* and the *raispolkom*.⁷³

(b) *The real scope of the kolkhoz cooperative statute*

Ultimately the kolkhoz cooperative statute was based on a fiction, because the fundamental principles that this statute implied were not respected. In fact all the decisions important for the life of the kolkhoz were decided externally and in advance by the Party and government organizations. Such was the case for the deductions made from kolkhoz funds, for the forms of work decentralization, for the form of remuneration, etc. All these questions gave rise to decisions taken outside the kolkhoz and which had to be accepted by the latter, including, when appropriate, the general assembly of kolkhozniks.⁷⁴ The latter then functioned as a means of *fictitiously transforming a decision taken outside the kolkhoz into a decision 'unanimously adopted' by the kolkhozniks*, thereby conferring a 'legitimacy' which otherwise it would not have had. This form of 'legitimation' is typical of 'Soviet democracy' of the '930s. The authorities could bring this about as soon as they disposed of means of pressure (like the expulsion or even arrest of recalcitrants) that was sufficient to allow the constraint on the course was a *bring about constraint* "by the consensus".

Naturally, the constant violation of the kolkhoz statutes did not solve any deep problem. It could only make their management more *bureaucratic*—more remote from production realities and more conflict ridden. Hence the so-frequent reminders

from the Party leadership that the cooperative character of the kolkhoz should be respected. But these reminders were in contradiction with other declarations demanding that local authorities should intervene even in the details of kolkhoz life. These contradictions between two official documents only reflect deeper contradictions. The latter were born from the need to extract a maximum tribute from the kolkhozes to support the current policy of accumulation and industrialization. However this need entered into conflict with the wish of the peasantry, which tried to keep for itself the biggest part of the product of its labor. At every moment it even came up in contradiction with another necessity, that of maintaining or possibly increasing the productive capacity of the kolkhozes.

The kolkhoz chairman found himself at the center of these contradictions. On the one hand his task was to respond positively to the requirements of the central authorities and when he was in effect one of the executive agent's faithful agents, on the other hand he was and he was elected by the kolkhozhnins, and on the other hand he had to deal with numerous requirements of his kolkhoz and the discontent of the kolkhozhnins. In a certain point he had to satisfy the demands of the latter in case failure to do so could make it impossible to obtain productive labor. These contradictions made the position of kolkhoz chairman at the time delicate because the principal demand that was imposed on them was to guarantee that the kolkhoz first and above all a provider of as much surplus product as was possible.

The historical nature of the kolkhoz cooperative was due to the contradictions in which their existence were caught and demonstrated throughout the 1930s and in the event of the war by the wish of the kolkhoz chairman. This given nature was caused by the attempts made by workers to meet certain exigencies demanded by the Party and by the wish of the latter to shelter such institutions. Some figures show the scale of this phenomenon. In 1933 an official gazette carried out over a whole part of the territory of the USSR showed that in the course of the single year 16,000 men of kolkhoz chairman were changed.¹ In 1937 46 percent of these chairmen had been in office less than 1 year.² Figures of the same order and the same period 1939 and 1940.³

These figures adequately confirm the vast reductions in the kolkhoz system and the fictitious character of the cooperative nature of the "collective farms."

VI The Consequences for the Authorities of the "Socialization" of Agriculture

For the authorities the "socialization" of agriculture emerged by way of two failures and four victories, but the scope of the latter was much greater than that of the failures.

The first failure involved the main agricultural products which achieved none of the objectives the the Soviet leaders had hoped to see realized. In numerous sectors "socialized" agriculture was subjected to a near permanent crisis. In the key sector production—after having sharply diminished at the beginning of the 1930s—only increased thereafter slightly and with difficulty. The essential harvest—that of grain—did not regain its 1910 level before World War I. Thus agriculture far from ending its support to general economic development became a burden which hindered that development.

The second failure involved the relationship of the authorities with the peasantry. In effect, the expropriation of the peasant masses, their incorporation into the system that reduced them to starvation rations and what imposed on them forced labor which was hardly remunerated, aroused and renewed deep and long-term peasant discontent. Discontent was all the greater because kolkhozniks were constantly suspected of "laziness" and of "desert." In addition, they felt themselves wronged and put by the authorities at the very bottom of the social ladder both in terms of the income that they received and of the degree of "respect" that the authorities accorded them. Taken as a whole, the peasantry was discriminated against in relation to the state it had duties but no rights. Bolshevik ideology was already the vehicle of such discrimination but toward the end of the 1930s it tended to move and more reproduce the anti-Russian and -peasant tradition. Like many other aspects of this epoch it became part of the resurgence of conservative and even reactionary attitudes that had characterized imperial Russia.

The peasantry made no demonstrable effort to develop any form of passive resistance. The authorities resorted to this with a view to breaking the peasants' will and by creating at all points a human race that the peasants and the kulaks would carefully watched their part in their exploitation. This new privileged class administered factually quite badly, as the peasants (and the state farms and the M.S.U. farms) absorbed considerable investment whose returns were desisory.

This collectivization, far from integrating the state into national economic life, only cut off further the peasants from the peasantry. More than ever, the country was divided into two nations, the new serfs and the other workers and strata. This would not prevent when the battle was larger during World War II these 'serfs' defending the soil they had done under the old regime.

However, the crisis of agriculture and the profound loss of the peasants were the price that the authorities and the new dominant class had to pay in order to win four other victories.

The first victory was political: collectivization cut off the authorities from the peasantry but above all it was what counted: it shattered this latter economically and politically. Collectivization put an end to all peasant economic independence for the peasants. It shattered the traditional peasant institutions and the types of social relations the latter permitted. In short, collectivization broke down being a peasantry infinitely more 'atomized' and more subject to capitalist forms of the division of labour than the individualized peasantry had been.

For the authorities and for the new dominant class, the elimination of 'poor' peasant holdings, whether these were poor or average peasants, comfortably off or not, was a great victory. Then, forth the NEP men having also been eliminated, the new class alone had at its disposal the principal means of production.

For the Bolshevik Party, thanks to its ideology (in which it also taken root a Leninist tradition), its administrative apparatus, the battle of kulaks was regarded in terms of a victory over capitalism, in the name of a genetic theory of capitalism, directly and inevitably engendered by small scale production.

The second victory won by the authorities and the new dominant class was their success in submitting the peasantry to an unprecedented over-exploitation, which permitted the realization of a gigantic effort of accumulation, most of which went to industry. True this was obtained at the price of a very substantial lowering of the living standard of the peasant masses, but this consequence was regarded as negligible: it was even officially ignored! For what counted for the Party leadership and for the class whose interests it served was putting the maximum means of production under its own control.

The third victory, which made the others long lasting, was the creation of a new economic form: the *kolkhoz* system which allowed simultaneously the expropriation of the peasantry and the transformation of its individual and sparse means of production into socially concentrated means of production following the methods belonging to the "prehistory of capital".

As has been seen, the *kolkhoz* system included actual agriculture, the *kolkhozes*, and the collection of administrative structures which directed and controlled the latter. It constituted a system sui generis for the exploitation of the great mass of agricultural workers. It combined characteristics which were those of a kind of state serfdom: compulsory work on the collective land and the attachment of the peasant to the soil with capitalist social relationships. These latter were evident in the form of the work process and in the extraction of surplus value destined essentially for the accumulation of capital in the state sector. The existence of individual plots and *avoskov* far from being in contradiction with the demand of such accumulation, on the contrary allowed it to intensify, as is the case with tenant types of agrarian capitalism (for example, in the capitalist plantations of Latin America).

The *kolkhoz* system was established on the ruins of the 1920s *kolkhozes* and of those of the old communal *sektors*. It constituted a relatively stable form, as witness the fact that it still exists half a century after its beginnings. The capitalist social relationship whose reproduction this system assured allowed the *kolkhozes* to free themselves in degree closer and closer to those of an ordinary capitalist enterprise.

this is what happened from 1938 when the kolkhoz could purchase its own means of production (ceasing then to depend on the MTS), and then later, when the kolkhoz could pay a wage to the kolkhozniks. But these later transformations did not in any way make the kolkhoz "independent" in regard to the Party and the state. They only modified the forms of its dependence.

Finally the fourth victory won by the authorities during the 1930s took the form of its transformation of the Soviet rural population into an immense "reserve industrial army" which provided millions of workers who could be integrated (voluntarily or not) into the development of industry and the town. The development took place in the course of other struggles which will now be examined.

Notes

- 1 For the scale of kolkhozes in 1940, and their equipment see A.Kh., 1958g., pp. 494,495,505.
- 2 It may be recalled that in November 1929 a special commission appointed by the CC had already recommended that there should be maintained individual plots and livestock for each kolkhoznik but this recommendation had then been rejected (See V. P. Danilov ed. *Otkrytiye puti kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaystva v sovetskiykh respublikakh* (Moscow 1963), p. 19 and B. A. Abramov in VI (1964) P. 40.) Certain provisions of the new statute were badly received by many kolkhozniks (See for example a letter sent to Stalin in N. Werth *Une communauté en URSS sous Staline* (Paris, 1981), pp. 176-77).
- 3 See above, Chapter 2, note 23.
- 4 In fact the reality of town - country relationship was never bound to the "decisions" of the authorities. Even in 1921 when the private free market for food products was practically illegal, it represented a turnover of 8.5 billion rubles (an increase of more than 80 percent over 1920). This figure equalled about 40 percent of the turnover achieved for the same products by the cooperatives and urban state shops. See Maslanyy *khryzys kooperativizatsii v SSSR* (1917-1923) (Moscow 1984), and also *itogi nauki i nye vostochnoi torgovli* (Moscow 1935) p. 42.
- 5 See I. Whitman 'The Kolkhoz Market' in *Soviet Studies*, April 1958 pp. 384-409. The abolished tax was replaced by a 3 percent duty (See B. Kartlay in *Marches*, p. 127).
- 6 In fact these were the kolkhozniks who were involved in cattle raising and wanted the latter to be individual - hoping to thereby ensure that

- 43 It would be tedious to analyse the receipts in kind and in money of the kolkhozes. In fact we have already given some indications of the distribution of agricultural production and on the payments made by the state to the kolkhozes. Above we shall see later what were the payments made by the kolkhozes. Those wishing to study for 1913 is the way in which was composed the distribution of receipts in kind and in money of the kolkhozes may refer to H. Wronski, *Remuneration* pp. 9, see also M. A. Kravtsov, *Material'noye polozheniye kolkhoznogo krest'yanstva v 1913 godu* in *V* No. 9 (1963) p. 16 which quotes archive documents. See also *Arutyan* vs *Voron* *Stalin* *problema*.
- 44 On these various points, see *Organizatsiya truda v kolkhozakh* (Moscow, 1931) the speech of Ya. Koylov on March 14, 1931 in *V* *1931* *goda* *trudovoye upravleniye* (Moscow, 1931) M. A. Kravtsov, *Pobeda kolkhoznogo stroya* (Moscow, 1964) H. Wronski, *Remuneration* pp. 22-23 (*Remuneration* *et al.* *Stalin* *problema*, pp. 127ff).
- 45 In *Social structure*, p. 114 (table 22). A. Arutyan, a Soviet researcher who has published the most detailed studies on problems of the peasantry and agriculture (see the article by Yves Fassin, *Capital* L. Evolution de la sociologie rurale en URSS in *Mondes en développement*, No. 22, 1976, pp. 42-43).
- 46 A. Arutyan, above.
- 47 It will be noted that 1940 is less favorable to the peasants than 1939 which, according to official statistics, a kolkhoz household received 10 rubles per year plus 17 quarters of grain (see *Soukhozhestvennoye stroitel'stvo* v 1933-1940gg. Moscow 1953) p. 108 and *Izvestiya* *zapsis* No. 76, p. 59 quoted by A. Novak, *40 let* *History*, p. 244-245.
- 48 A. N. Maslov, *Istoriya kolkhoznogo stroya* v 3 kh. p. 413 (table 2).
- 49 See A. Novak, *An Economic History* p. 240. Note that in 1939 the average money payment per household was respectively 12, 15, 20 rubles (See above, p. 244).
- 50 Decree of December 31, 1940.
- 51 See L. Eisenstein *et al.* *Management* pp. 163ff.
- 52 See above, p. 167.
- 53 See above, pp. 167-168.
- 54 In 1913, before the introduction of the bonus system described above, auditing organs reckoned that administrative services represented a small part of the personnel, absorbed at 25 percent of the working forces. See above, p. 168. A decree of September 10, 1913 then limited this item of expense.
- 55 A. Arutyan, a work translated in *40 let* *History* *Stalin* *problema* p. 142.
- 56 K.E. Wadkin, *Fuhrungskraft*, p. 38.
- 57 See M. Lawin, *The Kolkhoz*.
- 58 A. Arutyan, in *Archiv* *International* *de sociologie* p. 16.
- 59 In an article titled 'Some thoughts on Soviet Agricultural Administration' in *Studies on the Soviet Union*, 1964, New Series, vol. III, No. 4. A. Novak observes: 'The Party and state interest was devoted to the

three main objectives which were sometimes inconsistent with one another: to get resources out of agriculture (procurement accumulation); to control and change the peasants and usury; to increase output and efficiency."

62 This responsibility was confirmed by a decree of February 2, 1930. See A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 142.

63 KPSS (1953), p. 730 ff.

64 See for example Stalin's speeches of March 26 and June 29, 1932.

65 Stalin's speech of January 13, 1937. See his Works, Vol. 13, pp. 226-29.

66 On this point see the remarks of readers such as S. Koshor, P. Prityayev and I. Vavilov quoted by Lenin in *Ist. Zapiski*, No. 28, p. 52 and A. Nove, *An Economic History*.

67 KPSS (1953), pp. 803 ff.

68 See C. Bernstein et al. *Management*, pp. 159-60.

69 *Pravda*, March 22, 1940.

70 *Partinoye stroitel'stvo*, No. 10, 1941, p. 4.

71 See C. Bernstein et al. *Management*, p. 133.

72 As *Pravda* described it from 1930 (*Pravda*, April 6, 1930).

73 See *Sobremennaya zhizn' na stroye khrushchevskoy*, May 6, 1957.

74 On this point see C. Bernstein et al. *Management*, p. 145.

75 See M. A. Vukobratov in *Voprosy*, No. 9, 1958, p. 6 and I. E. Zelin in *ist. SSSR*, No. 5, 1964, p. 6, and I. F. Karcz in *The Soviet Rural Community*, p. 104.

76 See PS, No. 1, 1941, p. 37; No. 8, p. 45; No. 10, p. 9.

77 These various points are well illuminated in M. Lowin, *The Linkage*.

78 On this point see the comments of M. Lowin in R. C. Tucker, *Stalinism* (New York, 1977), particularly pp. 120-24.

79 This theory was insistently invoked by the leading group of the Party as soon as it was decided to liquidate NEP and it was useful for enunciating the innovations that were repeated throughout the 1930s. From October 1930 Stalin took great care to ensure that this theory was seen as emanating from Lenin. In his speech "Against the Rightist Threat" Stalin drew attention to two texts. He first recalled that according to Lenin the strength of capitalism resided in the strength of small-scale production which gives birth continuously, day after day, hour after hour, spontaneously and on a massive scale to capitalism and the bourgeoisie. See Lenin's "The Infantile Disease of Communism" of April 1921 in his *Sobremennaya*, Vol. 25 (Moscow, 1937, p. 173). Stalin then recalled another of Lenin's texts:

As long as we live in a small peasant country, there is a surer economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for communism.

The strength of small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeois continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale. (Works, Vol. II, pp. 216-17, quoting Lenin's December 1920 report to the Eighth Party Congress.)

PART 2

The militarized working class

As has been shown, the 1930s were marked by a major upheaval in the conditions of life in the countryside: social relationships that had been characteristic of peasant life were destroyed and replaced by new exploitative relationships of domination. Millions of workers had to leave the places where they had been born in order to go elsewhere, often without hope of return.

The migrations took many and confused turns, making it impossible to examine them all separately. In practice, they can be divided into two big categories, non-penal and penal migrations (the latter imposed by courts or by the GPU or NKVD). The former could be more or less voluntary: that is those who migrated did so by 'spontaneous' decision for economic reasons or for fear of repression. At the same, the non-penal migrations could also be imposed on certain workers: for example, on those who became a target for the 'organized recruitment' within the framework of *orgnabor*!

Above all, the non-penal migrations helped the process of urbanization and the creation of a *salariat*, which was not usually the case with penal migrations since the latter led the migrants to prisons, camps and regions that were often thinly populated where they were made to live, and they were usually allocated to work which might or might not be of a penal type. Nevertheless, even penal migrations which took migrants to a camp did not necessarily exclude the payment of a wage, and they could therefore also result in an apparent 'urbanization', especially when enormous camps were formed, so much so that one could not attribute the progress of urbanization to non-penal migrations alone.

Notes

- 1 See below, the first part of the following chapter.
- 2 It is almost certain that part of the "urban" population of the state actually belonged in fact to the labor camp population. "Urban" population was defined according to quantitative criteria (agglomerations of 5,000 people or more, or even 3,000 or more if there were industrial activities present). Many of the camps fell into these categories. For example, it is known that in 1938 the Vorkuta camp (*Vorkutpechlag*) comprised 16,508 people, of whom 15,141 were prisoners. These figures, and others, were established by P. I. Negretov, who worked in a Vorkuta mine from 1945 to 1960 and who had access to the camp archives, whose documents he quotes with precision. Negretov is a historian still living in Vorkuta. His work has circulated in the form of *Samizdat* in the journal *XXV vek*. The article "How Vorkuta Began" was translated and published (with the help of Zh. Medvedev) who sent it in *Soviet Studies*, No. 4, Vol XXII, pp. 565-75. The question of whether part of the prison camp population was enumerated as "urban population" in the census is controversial. The main lines of this controversy can be seen by referring to S. Rosetov, "An Assessment of the Sources and Uses of Gulag Forced Labour," *Soviet Studies*, No. 1, Vol XXXIII (Jan. 1981), pp. 51ff, and S. G. Wheatcroft, "On Assessing the Size of Forced Concentration Camp Labour in the Soviet Union 1929-1956," in *Soviet Studies*, April 1981, pp. 405ff.

The urbanization process

DURING the 1930s the Soviet Union experienced an accelerated growth of towns, conforming to the capital's laws of urbanization. In spite of numerous declarations no serious effort was made to halt the development of big towns to which immigrants from the rural areas came and heaped themselves up without anything coherent being done to find housing for them. Thus millions of workers were obliged to live in barracks, sheds and enormous dormitories lacking any kind of comfort while others increased the density of occupation of older places of residence already crowded, or found a place in corridors, kitchens, attics and basements.

Some figures give an indication of the scale of the urbanization process. According to official statistics between 1926 and 1939 (census years) the urban population grew from 42,6 million to 56,1 million a growth of 112 percent. In twelve years while the total population grew from 147,0 to 170,8 million, during the same years the population of Moscow grew from 2,1 to 4,1 million and of Leningrad from 1,7 to 3,2 million. The population of the Moscow periphery grew by more than three times. The twelve cities which in 1926 exceeded 200,000 inhabitants witnessed a population growth of around 90 percent, while several towns of 150,000 or more (like Karaganda and Magnitogorsk) surged during this period.

1. Urbanization and population movement

The extremely rapid growth of the urban population was above all the consequence of a great migration. According to Lomster's estimates the 'natural growth' of the urban population should have allowed the latter to reach, at a maximum, the figure of 32.4 million. At a minimum, therefore, those who had migrated to the towns would have numbered 23 million.⁴

Two remarks might be made at this point:

a) Migrations from countryside to towns were only a part of the total migratory flow. To calculate the latter there would need to be added [something which the statistics do not allow] migrations between towns as well as migrations between rural regions.⁵ To obtain the total of migrants several millions would need to be added to the 23 million which, according to Lomster, is the net balance of country-town migrations.

b) The figure of 23 million undoubtedly underestimates these latter migrations, because several indices suggest that the 'natural increase' of the urban population was less than Lomster's estimation. In fact, after 1927 this increase fell rapidly: it was even apparently negative, notably in 1930 and 1931.⁶ This was, among other things, one of the consequences of the departure, at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan, of a part of the urban workers, who went to the countryside with the intention of defending their families against the threat of Dekulakization. But above all during much of the 1930s it was a result of the decline of urban living standards, of the food supply crisis, and of the housing situation at a time when abortion was unrestricted: the consequent fall in the birth rate led the Soviet government to end 'freedom of abortion' in 1936.⁷

In any case, whatever the figures that are looked at, one thing is certain: during these years millions of workers were uprooted. They had to 'establish themselves' within hundreds of thousands of kilometers away from their place of origin. Among these workers were millions who were forced to migrate to particularly inhospitable regions like the Far North and Eastern Siberia. However, much of the migration in these latter regions had a penal nature and in no way constituted urbanization: it was a consequence above all of the deportations discussed in Chapter 4 of this Part 2.

to return to the non-penal magistrats. Their extraordinary scale was due mainly to the brutal destruction of all social relationships in the countryside and to the decline of village living conditions. This is what drew millions of men away from their conditions of existence and impelled them to go to seek work far from their places of birth to 'put themselves at the service' of an industrialization process which in fact was not under the control of those who seemed to be its managers.

Realistically speaking, these migrations were due above all to the way in which collectivization took place. It has been seen how at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s collectivization was accompanied by repressive measures applied on a large scale. Very many peasants at this time fled from their villages to escape the risk of repression and its consequences (in particular deportation). The flow of peasants leaving their villages for fear of being regarded as kulaks or classed with kulaks (under the term *proletaria hunk*) was enlarged still further by the circumstance that those so classed were usually refused membership of kolkhozes, in which case even if they were not deported they were deprived of some or all of their implements and obliged to live on and off from the village and often inferior to the best. In this situation a large proportion of these peasants preferred to migrate to the towns.

The migratory flow was also due to numerous economic causes. For example, the famine at the end of the first Five Year Plan which struck a great part of the peasantry and the decline in village living conditions made many women migrate to the towns. In the latter they hoped to find a less intolerable life but this was not always the case at all.

During the Second Five Year Plan the use of repressive measures and the yearning for an escape from living conditions which were especially worsening in the countryside continued to feed a migratory flow from village to town. In reality these voluntary migrations also deprived the countryside of the labour force needed to ensure adequate harvests. Hence the measures taken to attract the peasants to the kolkhozes and reintroduction of the internal passport on December 1, 1932.¹⁴

Despite their scale the voluntary migrations did not always suffice to provide the required numbers of urban workers. The

authorities took various measures to cope with the shortage of labor which then arose (one of the most significant developed from 1930) when the scale of migration, although substantial, was not enough to provide the needs of industrialization. This measure was known as 'organized recruitment' of migrants (*organizovannyy nabor rabochikh*).

The first references to the *organizatsiya* appeared in the Soviet press at the beginning of 1930. Thus a directive of this period sought to regulate this type of recruitment (which was at that time basically directed toward seasonal labor requirements). The regulations established by this directive were in fact followed later.

According to these regulations, the *kolkhozes* were obliged to provide the number of workers fixed by the plan. To look after the details of the operations, recruiting agents were sent into the countryside. *Kolkhoz* managers designated these *kolkhozniks* who would have to leave and go into industry. A refusal of a *kolkhoznik* to obey the order received was punished as an act of insubordination and as an infraction; were reparations. From a perusal of the press it would appear that the recruiting operations did not always proceed smoothly, thanks to the resistance of a section of the peasants and also the *kolkhoz* managers. Sometimes the latter demanded that 50 per cent of the wages due to *kolkhozniks* employed in industry should be sent to the *kolkhoz*. This practice was, of course, condemned by the regulations promulgated at the time, which never belatedly authorized a deduction of the sum of 10 per cent of a migrant's wage.

In March 1931 the *organizatsiya* was reorganized and put under the authority of the government, as the institutions of labor (over the industrial enterprises) which negotiated directly with the *kolkhozes*. The Labor Commissariat divided the recruiting work among fifteen administrative districts in order to avoid competition.

The recruitment organization resulted from a combination of several circumstances:

On the one hand, from the rapidly extending size of the labor demand by the towns, mines and new construction sites. Before 1917 the countryside had never had to provide seriously and fully of workers for non-agricultural tasks. On the other hand, different causes (varying according to the period

tended to hold back the rural exodus. For example, some kolhoz managers—who faced heavy compulsory labour demands—refused to work with kulaks whose work was indispensable for the meeting of those burdensome obligations. Certain kolhoz managers then imposed sanctions on those who left to work in the towns. Such sanctions took varying and sometimes illegal forms and included fines, confiscation of property and/or the immediate expulsion of the families of departed peasants.

In a speech to industrial managers on June 21, 1931, Stalin drew attention to the importance of organization. He said that industry could no longer rely on a "spontaneous inflow" from the countryside to provide sufficient labour power, and he emphasized that it was "necessary to move to a policy of organized recruitment." He issued to the industrial managers the order to "recruit manpower in an organized way, by means of contracts with the collective farms."

In his June 23 speech Stalin explained the exhaustion of spontaneous rural emigration in terms of improvement in the peasantry's situation. "Analysis of the decline in the situation experienced at that time in the Soviet countryside shows that this explanation was completely false."

Shortly after the speech of Stalin that has just been quoted there appeared a decree "On emigration" which regulated contracts with more precision. "In kolhozes which provided the workers had the right to compensation in the form of materials and credits. Deductions from the emigrants' wages were totally forbidden (although in reality this did not prevent such deductions continuing). The rights as kulhoz members of emigrants' families were not to be reduced—henceforth, in principle, each kolhoznik had to sign personally a labour contract. However, provision was made that if there was not a sufficient number of volunteers, the kolhoz management could take coercive measures.

It should be noted that the contracts signed by the recruiting organs included undertakings that often could not be observed. The trade union paper went so far as to state that these contracts could be nothing more than a "scrap of paper." Workers were nevertheless required to respect them: if they infringed them they were considered guilty of an economic offence.

Article 31 of the Penal Code) and could be tried in accordance with a summary procedure.²⁰

After 1934 – and especially after 1935, when the right of collective farms to a private plot and private livestock was confirmed – peasants were less inclined to emigrate to the towns than they had been in the early 1930s. In the towns housing conditions and food supply were difficult, while real wages had fallen considerably. So – organized recruitment continued.

The difficulties which this recruitment came up against led to various measures. Some envisaged putting pressure on the employers and the kulaks by reducing their incomes, etc., indirectly.²¹ Others reorganized the recruitment of workers in the villages. For example, on July 21, 1938 a Sovnarkom decree changed the organized recruitment. This decree created a central commission of organizers with similar commissions at republican and regional levels. These commissions established quotas for workers to be supplied by regions and districts and divided them among the commissariats; the latter dividing their quotas between their enterprises.²² Apparently, this new organization permitted a more regular arrival of the labor thus recruited. The wage earner henceforth benefited from an advance of wages and from paid travel expenses. Nevertheless the system amounted to a form of forced labor.²³

In spite of the measures taken – some of which granted certain ‘advantages’ to the workers recruited by organizers and others of which imposed penalties on those who did not observe the contracts made by the representatives of recruiting organizations – the resistance of workers to what was a form of forced recruitment often took the form of a refusal to turn up at the assigned place of work, or by a change of enterprise despite the regulations. Moreover, the activity of the organizers involved so many workers that it was in fact impossible to fully guarantee the recruitment envisaged by the plan. Thus in 1940 2.8 million kolhozians were to have been recruited in the RSFSR, but only 1.7 million actually were, and of the latter 1.5 million showed up at their place of work.²⁴

In sum, the urbanization process was a combination – not under control – of voluntary migration and organized recruitment – hence the anarchical nature of this process.

II. The anarchic character of the urbanization process

The rural emigration and urbanization process was in accord with a policy which destroyed the old peasantry and atomized the working class. This policy gave pride of place to a strongly concentrated industry. It sought to achieve maximum accumulation and to create conditions for a rigorous subordination of the workers to exploitative requirements. In its actual course, the urbanization process was for the most part uncontrolled. It suffered the effects of economic and social contradictions that had their own dynamic. Also urbanization did not develop according to the forecasts of the economic plans nor according to the needs of economic growth. For the latter grew faster than the plans had forecast, especially as industrial labor productivity did not increase as the plans had specified.

The overfulfillment of targets of the first two Five-Year Plans as regards country to town migration is extremely indicative of the lack of control over the urbanization process. For example, the First Plan envisaged that the urban population in 1933 would be 34.7 million, whereas it reached 38.4 million at the end of 1932 (official date of the end of the first plan). Similarly, the Second Plan foresaw an urban population of 49.1 million at the end of 1937, but in fact it was 53.2 million.²⁵

From time to time the Soviet authorities worried about this development that was beyond their control. For example, at the beginning of 1933 *Izvestia* wrote:

The towns have grown too much. Total supply of urban agglomerations, supplying of construction sites and the provision of necessary products for the big centers pose problems which are complex and difficult to solve. Migrations of large masses of population seriously hinder the country's food supply, cause urban overpopulation and provoke an insurmountable housing crisis.²⁶

Such a situation reflected the uncontrolled nature of the migratory processes. It was to this lack of control that were

addressed the many administrative and economic aspects of the enormous forest and metallurgical industries. The towns had a passport, etc.

This did not prevent the anarchical development of the towns into a population entity that had considerable economic, social and political consequences.

The enormous growth of the towns thanks to the arrival of a mass of peasants brought with it a kind of atomization of urban life. Either towns or very large parts of the population of certain towns were toward the end of the 14th century by immigrants of rural origin. The latter were preoccupied by concerns very different from those of the original citizens. They had different aspirations and a different way of life. Moreover, having been uprooted, they were usually isolated from one another. Often they came from different villages and regions. They got to know each other only with difficulty. Hence there was a virtual atomization of the urban population exacerbated by the extreme material difficulties of daily life.

The one-time rural folk who had just arrived in the towns scarcely had little sympathy for the government's and parties' policies. In their eyes, these policies were responsible for the dramatic overthrow of their previous way of life. They had to abandon their land, leave their villages and try to assert themselves in an urban life that would shock them. It was harsh and imposed many constraints for which they were not prepared. Thus the relations between the Party and the urban masses deteriorated badly.

In general, the deterioration of living standards in the towns and of working conditions in industry led to confusion in the urban masses, instability of the workforce, increases in alcoholism and a tendency toward indiscipline. The authorities reacted to this situation by severe measures that sought to smother every sign of individual or collective resistance on the scene. These measures were not limited simply to police and penal repression, but also included deep changes in the constraints that burdened industrial workers. Consequently, it may be said that the urbanization process had as its corollary not only the development of a wage-earning class but also a rigidifying of factory despotism.

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- 11 According to Lorimer's estimates, the migratory flow involved 1.4 million people in 1929, 2.6 in 1930, and 4.1 in 1931 (*Population* p. 150).
- 12 See *ZI* March 4, 1930.
- 13 For more on these points, see *Izvestiya* March 17, 1930; *Trud* March 24 1930 and *Pravda* April 6 1930.
- 14 See *Voprosy truda*, Aug.-Sept. 1932, p. 51, quoted by S. M. Schwarz, *Labor in the Soviet Union* (London, 1963), p. 58.
- 15 J. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 13, p. 37.
- 16 See above p. 55.
- 17 See Part 1 of this volume.
- 18 Decree of June 30 (*Izvestiya*, July 1 1931).
- 19 *Trud*, March 3 1934.
- 20 *Sovetskaya yustitsiya*, No. 17, 1933, p. 21, quoted by S. Schwarz, p. 60.
- 21 Among these measures was the prohibition of activities of an industrial nature in the countryside. This prohibition was at first applied in the local plan but was later made general by a decree of October 1936 (*Izvestiya*, Oct. 23 1936). Just a few small activities escaped this prohibition. The latter helped to lower the standard of life in the countryside since rural industry was relatively prosperous during NEP. Such a measure denied an equal distribution of industry across the country. It exacerbated town/country inequalities and the dependence of the country. It tended to enhance the pay-off of state investments.
- 22 See *Trudovye zakonodatel'stvo SSSR* (Moscow, 1941), article 5, quoted by R. Conquest, *Industrial Workers in the USSR* (London 1967) p. 10, also C. Bionstock et al., *Management* p. 39.
- 23 These different arrangements were maintained after the war. Khrushchev referred to them in 1956 (See AP, June 7, 1956). The post-war five-year plans also specified that this kind of recruitment would be applied to demobilized soldiers and workers "liberated" from certain branches of the economy (See V. S. Andreyev and P. A. Gurov, *Organizatsionnyye razboichki SSSR* (Moscow 1958) pp. 14 and 7).
- 24 *Pravda*, April 5, 1939.
- 25 This is an estimate, see S. N. Prukopovich, *Istoria ekonomiki SSSR*, p. 62.
- 26 *Izvestiya*, Feb. 2, 1933.

Extension of the wage-earning class and the rigidifying of factory despotism

THE combination of a vast rural exodus with highly centralized accumulation led to the rapid development of wage relationships.

For example, between 1928 and 1940 the number of wage-earners employed in the Soviet economy grew almost threefold, from 11.4 to 33.9 million.¹ In 1940 these wage-earners were more than 40 percent of the economically active population.² This extension of wage-earning was above all connected with urbanization,³ and was an integral part of the process of accumulation. Like the latter, the extension of wage-earning was not really under control. For example, at the end of the First Five-Year Plan the number of wage-earners enumerated by the Central Statistical Bureau was 22.9 million, although the Plan had envisaged only 15.9 million.*

As is generally known, the growth of the wage-earning population was due to the reduction in the number of peasants and *kolkhoz*niks, but it was also due to the transformation into wage-earners of numerous artisans and NEPmen.

The enormous growth of the wage-earning population is presented by official Soviet ideologists as testimony to the henceforth socialist nature of USSR and to the strengthening of the working class. Neither of these interpretations can be accepted. In the first place, the development of a wage-earning class cannot be regarded as identical with the development of "socialism." The wage relationship is the basic capitalist relationship.

therefore the increased number of wage-earners only demonstrates the victory of the capitalist revolution which progressed faster at the end of the 1920s. As for the working class, it is possible to talk of its 'strengthening'. True, among the new wage-earners there were numerous workers but the number of workers among the wage-earners decreased between 1929 and 1940. The proportion fell from 74.6 to 67.3 per cent.¹ What really happened was that there was a very rapid increase in the number of state employees and cadres, in other words a pronounced bureaucratization of economy and society.

All the same, when it is a question of the strengthening or the weakening of workers, industrial labor, or more generally of direct producers during the 1930s the numerical trends have only a secondary importance. What is important is the change in living and working conditions that affected the mass of the wage-earners, especially the workers. Significantly from the beginning of the 1930s or even from the end of the 1920s² there was a virtual anti-worker offensive which corresponded with a deepening of capitalist relationships.

I The immediate subordination of the workers to the utilization requirements of the means of production

The anti-worker offensive at first took the form of a pronounced increase of the powers that administrators in the economic and state structure could bring to bear on the workers. At the end of the NEP the immediate justification for this increase of power were the problems created by relatively weak labor discipline (manifested by 'under-utilization' of the workday) and the tendency of workers to frequently quit the enterprise where they worked in the hope of finding better working conditions elsewhere.³

Problems posed by a pronounced labor 'turnover' became especially difficult after 1929, following the influx to the factories of workers lacking any experience of industrial work who had been uprooted and subjected to many material difficulties (housing, food-supply, etc.) and hence were lacking stability. However, instead of dealing with these difficulties, the authorities

enhances the disciplinary powers of managers, while the enterprises directed by the latter found themselves a knee very difficult to get. They had to reach even a rapid increase of production and productivity with a pronounced reduction of costs. It was in order to meet these objectives that managers of enterprises were invested with ever increasing authority, especially in matters of hiring and firing.

During NEP the recruitment and dismissal of workers was not the business solely of the enterprises' managements and personnel services. At that period the trade unions still enjoyed relative independence in their relations with the enterprise in a paradox and they did not have to get production and profitability in prime of place. At that time they effectively intervened in questions of recruitment and dismissal notably by opposing decisions that would seriously harm the workers' interests.

Things changed drastically at the beginning of the 1930s. In the name of industrialization and economic planning, all obstacles to the free and complete domination of recruitment and dismissal by the leaders of industry were eliminated by a series of measures whose aims and methods were basically defined by the decisions of the RSFSR Sovnarkom of September 6, 1930 of the Central Executive Committee and USSR Sovnarkom of December 15, 1930 and of the USSR Labor Commissariat of December 28, 1930.⁴

The officially envisaged aims included the most efficient possible utilization of the means of production, planned allocation of the labor force, the equal distribution of the available workers between industrial enterprises, branches of industry and regions,⁵ and "control over the rational utilization of the work force in enterprises of the socialized sector."

Chiefly it was not so much a question of assuring a certain stability in the work force as to direct the labor more effectively with the "needs" of the state enterprises and of economic growth and accumulation.

The decisions adopted in this way expressed a political will, but their application in practice encountered many obstacles. The existence of labor legislation passed in the early 1920s that acknowledged a series of workers' rights (only partly but could not be abrogated or systematically infringed) and the

resistance of workers who as, the years passed, found ways of evading the regulations, the non-cooperation of enterprise managers, each trying to recruit a large number of workers in order to reach the production plans for which he was responsible, the ignorance of the real "needs" for manpower of the various industries, and so on.

In fact, the 1930 measures failed. The same fate befell the attempts made by enterprise managers to try to reduce labor turnover by getting workers to sign an undertaking not to leave the factory before a certain period had elapsed. Acknowledging these failures, the authorities (with the cooperation of the trade unions), adopted ever stricter measures to limit and finally prevent workers leaving their employment.

(a) The progressive disappearance of the workers' freedom to make and break work contracts

At the beginning of 1931, the Central Committee of Trade Unions changed the rules for social security so as to make sick benefits and other benefits vary in amount according to a worker's period of service at his enterprise. In later years this ruling became more and more severe.⁹

These measures having proved insufficient in relation to the aims envisaged by the Soviet government, the latter decided on September 27, 1932 to reintroduce the internal passport. Henceforward each wage-earner had to hand in his passport to the enterprise which employed him. The passport was to carry a mention of previous jobs held by the holder. In this way a check was made on the conditions under which a worker had left his previous job. With this decree, the authorities also envisaged that they could reduce the growth of the urban population in a period of food supply and housing crisis, and anchor the kollektizatsiia in their villages since, as everyone realized only in exceptional cases would kollektizatsiia get passports. In general the kollektizatsiia and peasants could only obtain a temporary certificate to allow them to carry out seasonal work. This certificate was valid for a maximum of three months and could be extended only by request of the employer.¹⁰

figures show that from 1933 labour turnover slackened in industry. In 1935 the average period of employment in an enterprise reached almost fourteen months although this was still short.

A new measure was the one taken in September 1938. This was the general introduction for all wage-earners of the work book.¹ This booklet was originated by the enterprise that hired or a worker for his first job. During the currency of the work contract the enterprise retained this booklet and noted on it all the points laid down by the law, and in particular the punishments imposed on the worker. The booklet was returned to the holder only if the enterprise employing him agreed to dispense with him. To get himself employed elsewhere, the worker had to hand his booklet to the new employer, who otherwise could not take him on. In this way each worker was bound to an enterprise and his successive employers knew all about his working career. At least that was the intention, although it seems that in fact that quite a number of workers changed their jobs without observing the regulations.

Therefore, so as to tie the worker even more firmly to the enterprise, other measures were taken that reinforced the arrangements made in the decree of December 20, 1938. This involved mainly the decree of December 28 of the same year which was adopted, according to the official explanation, in order to 'strengthen labour discipline, improve the administration of social insurance and struggle against abuses in all fields'.²

This decree involved on a worker wishing to leave his job a one-month notice in place of six days. Even if this requirement was observed, a worker who left his job without the agreement of his management lost all right to social insurance benefits for the first six months of his new job. Agreement of the original management was not enough to preserve the rights of the workers, such rights were reduced in effect for 15 years to receive full benefits it was necessary to belong to the same enterprise and be utilized for at least six years. The character of employment at an enterprise, the norms were sickness benefits reduced.³

As it was concluded that the effects of these different decisions were not enough, a decree of June 26, 1940 remodelled the legislation and strengthened disciplinary measures.

It reintroduced the eight-hour day and the seven-day week and explicitly forbade workers and employers to leave the enterprise of their own volition.¹⁷ In this way the right was abolished for any worker to break the work contract without going to another enterprise, provided due notice was given.

Article 4 of the decree of June 29, 1940 provided that a worker could not quit an enterprise except in exceptional circumstances (illness, involuntary retirement). Article 5 stipulated penal sanctions (two to four months in prison, plus a fine) for leaving their job without permission. Indignifying conduct was penalized in particular by 'corrective labor' carried out in the factory without deprivation of free time (Article 21 of the Penal Code). This labor was paid at a lower rate than normal work and was subject to stricter discipline with all rigors of this discipline entailing the imposition of a penal regime.¹⁸ In reality this 'corrective labor' was a form of prison labor carried out at the usual place of work.

In September 1940 it was decided that the time spent in 'corrective labor' would be regarded as an interruption of employment that invalidated the worker's right to social security. This right would be restored only after six months of normal work. In the meantime, a right to express one's discontent was provided. The journals of the Soviet Procuracy published several articles encouraging the severest interpretation of these decisions.¹⁹

The reluctance of judges to enforce these various measures was regarded as great that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued an order on the disciplinary responsibilities of judges, enjoining action to be taken against those who applied the law less than the required severity. Another order, dated August 1940, provided that matters of penal labor legislation and decrees would be passed by a single judge, not by the collegial composition of one judge and two assessors.²⁰ These two orders were actually contrary to Article 112 of the 1936 Constitution which provided for the independence of judges and the collegial structure of all tribunals concerned with penal cases. However, these were far from the first violations of the Constitution and it is noteworthy that they were published in official texts.

These various measures, as well as others which had to do with more intensification of labor discipline, were taken in parallel

and at a time when the government and the press claimed that thanks to the Russo-German Pact the danger of war had receded.²¹ Moreover they remained in force for several years after the war, although they were then to some extent falling into decay.²²

As for the true wartime measures (that is, those concerning labor mobilization), these did not appear until 1941 and 1942²³ and in principle did not remain in force after the war.

On the whole during the 1930s and early 1940s there was a continuing reduction of the freedom enjoyed by workers to conclude or break work contracts. At the same time labor legislation tended towards transformation into penal legislation. Thus efforts developed to "plan" employment directly. Among these efforts, a special place belonged to the measures permitting compulsory transfers of labor and the 'organized recruitment' of workers. The fact is that while the authorities refused workers the right to change their jobs, they provided enterprises with the possibility of transferring workers from one job to another.

b) Dismissal and obligatory transfers from one enterprise to another

The already mentioned decision of the Central Executive Committee of Sovnarkom, dated December 15, 1930, gave ample powers to the labor commissariats of the USSR and the different republics to 'systematically redistribute the labor force within the framework of production plans fixed by the competent authorities. The text of the decision was really intended to apply essentially to skilled workers and technicians.²⁴ In 1930 in fact unskilled labor was still abundantly available.

The text of December 15, 1930, and those which followed soon after²⁵ aimed above all at reducing the 'excesses' of labor that some enterprises strove to preserve in order to cope better with their production targets—that is, they aimed to remove the 'spare fat' of these enterprises or, as was said at the time, to "scrape off" the excess of workers.²⁶

In 1932 the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Court established a distinction between workers, on the one hand, and

specialists and technicians on the other. The former could refuse a transfer, in which case they were dismissed, the latter had to accept a transfer or face eventual penal prosecution. After the abolition, by a decree of June 23, 1933, of the Commissariat of Labor,²⁷ the right of carrying out the measures described in the provisions already mentioned fell to enterprise managements and to the main managements of the industrial commissariats or commissariats to which they had been subordinated. It was the measures for "removing the fat" which, above all, continued to be taken at this period.

On the other hand, certain provisions of the decrees of June 26, 1940 and October 20, 1940²⁸ put greater emphasis on the compulsory movement of workers from one place of work to another. These provisions allowed "the forced transfer of engineers, technicians, foremen, employees and skilled workers of an enterprise, administration or institution to another. They were later extended to numerous categories of workers.²⁹ The latter could not refuse a transfer except in special cases; save in such cases, refusal brought penal sanctions."³⁰ The same kind of thing happened with the creation of "manpower reserves."

(c) *The creation of "manpower reserves"*

From the First Five-Year Plan, efforts were made with a view to installing a system of *obligatory allocation* of young workers to jobs decided by the state administrations. Thus a decision of the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh) of November 27, 1929 compelled young people graduating from enterprise vocational schools (essentially workers' sons) to spend three years in a job to which they were posted by the economic department that had financed their vocational training schools. On September 15, 1933 this decision was confirmed by the Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom.³¹ Numerous indications had suggested that compulsory postings were encountering difficulties, hence the need for the 1933 confirmation.

This regulation was confirmed by a decree of October 2, 1940 which created a new organ, the "General Directorate of Labor Reserves."³² Supervising all the vocational schools, this

General Directorate was to recruit each year 800,000 to 1,000,000 young people to 14-15 years who would spend two years in these schools. Those who were 16-17 spent only six months (and therefore did not receive a true trade education, but were simply trained for a specialized job). At their graduation the former students were directed by the Directorate of Labor Reserves to an industrial or transport enterprise, where they had to stay for four years.

The decree of October 2 specified that if there was an inadequate number of volunteers for these schools, the annual contingent would be topped up by compulsory direction in the countryside. It was kolkhoz chairmen who carried out the selection process (limited to two percent of each age group). In the towns, the town soviets did this.

At first, these arrangements applied only to young men. When the USSR entered the war, they were extended to young women. The establishment of a system of labor reserves was undoubtedly accelerated by the war but it was nevertheless maintained after the war, with the creation of a Labor Reserves Ministry.

This system had an obvious class significance: it was not universal. For example, secondary students (eighth year and upwards) and higher education students were exempt. On the other hand, another decree of the same date of October 2, 1940 abolished (contrary to the 1936 Constitution) the secondary education (8th-10th year) and higher education grants. In consequence, young people exempt from recruitment by the labor reserves services were essentially the children of parents whose salaries were high enough to pay for secondary and higher education.³³

These measures were part of a virtual anti-worker offensive. But they represent only one aspect of a process which increasingly prevented the immediate producers from exercising direct influence on their conditions of work. Another aspect was the transformation—to be examined shortly—of the methods by which wages and work norms were determined. Such an offensive, moreover, could not be set in motion without the subjection of the workers to a systematic and severe repression. The latter, as is well known, expressed itself in the development of police organs inside enterprises and in the extension

of forced labor. All the changes which affected in these ways the situation of the workers expressed the intensifying grip on the latter put by the demands of capital and of accumulation. Marx had already observed that one of the characteristics of capital is that the worker in fact belongs to the capitalist class before he sells himself to an individual capitalist.⁴⁴ During the 1930s the authorities reduced to a minimum the visible freedom of the worker to take opportunities to sell his working capacity and this helped to atomize the working class.

II. The authoritarian determination of working conditions and the development of factory despotism

In their effort directed toward the greatest possible exploitation of the worker, so as to gain the maximum accumulation, the authorities increasingly were led to subject wages and working conditions to unilateral decisions by the economic organs, and they tended to subordinate trade union activity to their preoccupations with production and profitability. In these conditions the tendency predominated of "fixing" by administrative decision the volume of the wage, its distribution, and the levels of different categories of wage. As the volume presenting the First Five-Year Plan put it: "The wages question occupies a central place in the Five-Year Plan. It is born that the fundamental categories of the Plan meet the working-class living standard, the development of labor productivity, production costs, the rhythm of accumulation, elements of the demand and supply equation. For the Soviet state the wage question constitutes deep down, the foundation of the plan."⁴⁵

Throughout the 1930s measures multiplied for "subjecting wages to the plan targets (especially those of the annual plans which were themselves incorporated on enterprise plans) and for fixing work norms that each producer had to fulfil in order to receive a predetermined wage. It will be seen that the carrying out of these measures did not permit effective coordination between the plan targets and the evolution of wages and labor productivity. Nominal wages, real wages and worker productivity all developed according to rhythms and even orders that were

very widely removed from the forecasts of the plans. The scale and the permanence of these diverging tendencies show that it was not simply a question of "mistakes" in planning but of the absence—despite the plans—of a genuinely planned economy.

In fact the real evolution of the economy was affected by class struggles and by contradictions in accumulation, which had their repercussions on the movements of prices and wages.

Although the measures taken to try to assure the achievement of plans relating to wages and work norms appeared to be ineffective, they nevertheless produced important qualitative effects on production relationships and working conditions. They had the result, in particular, of replacing collective labor agreements and negotiations with regulatory measures, and they imposed new features on wage relationships.

(a) The decay of collective agreements and the development of unilateral regulation of working conditions

According to the Labor Code of November 9, 1922, the wages paid in different industries resulted from collective agreements made between the trade unions and the managements of industry. The same thing happened with working conditions not regulated by law. Individual contracts had to conform with the clauses of the collective agreements. Violation of the latter by industrial managements was cause for penal action, as was infraction of laws protecting the labor force.²⁶ At the same time there ensued general agreements (for branches of the economy) and local agreements. The Labor Code provided that agreements would only come into force after being registered by the Narodnoye Otdeleniye. This arrangement was to ensure that the labor protection laws were not violated by collective agreements. However, after government decisions were taken to limit wage increases (from 1926) the registration of agreements was used, among other methods, to keep wage increases within the limits fixed by the government, limits which in principle had to be respected in the course of negotiations.²⁷

In fact, up to 1929 the trade union organizations were able to use the collective agreements to obtain working conditions that sometimes were more advantageous for workers than had been aimed at by the government's decisions and by the plans. After the beginning of the First Five Year Plan this attitude of the unions was violently denounced. For example, *Pravda* of October 22, 1929 published a "letter from workers" which stated:

When collective agreements come up for renewal backward groups of workers, stirred up by counter-revolutionary Trotskyites, rightist opportunists kulakophiles will start pressing their non-proletarian and greedy demands. We appeal to all workers of the Soviet Union to put up the most active resistance to the attacks of grabbers.⁴⁰

Between 1931 and 1933 several government decisions limited the substance of collective agreements to matters which conformed with the plan targets and the state regulation of wages.⁴¹ Collective agreements then became less and less useful, and in fact were no longer signed. However, after Stalin had reprimanded the unions (in May 1935 for lacking interest in the workers' material and cultural needs)⁴² union organizations tried in 1937, to conclude new collective agreements, but this effort had no results, or at least no results of practical significance.⁴³

During the 1930s the Soviet leaders reaffirmed that fixing wages was solely a matter for industrial managers, naturally within the framework of the tasks which were imposed on them. For example, in 1934 at a conference of industrial cadres the People's Commissar for Industry Ordzhonikidze declared:

As managers, responsible administrators and firemen, you must personally occupy yourselves with wages in all their current details and not let other people handle this important question. Wages are the most powerful weapon you have.⁴⁴

And in 1935 Andreev, a politburo member, reaffirmed that

Wage scales must be left entirely in the hands of industry managers. They must fix the norms.⁴⁵

The policy followed from the First Five-Year Plan resulted finally in a total concentration of Wage-fixing power in the hands of enterprise managers charged with executing the measures concerning wages and norms ordered by the Party and government in cooperation with the planning organs. In these conditions, the fact that the wages actually paid⁴⁵ diverged constantly from those 'forecast' by the plans testifies to the scale of the economic and social contradictions, and of the failure to cope with the latter. The same might be said of the disappearance of collective agreements since the procedures allowing workers to protest in a set form against the abuses of authority by enterprise managers and cadres existed with the development of arbitrariness and the decline of industrial working conditions. In this connection, the anasthetizing of the Commission for Settling Labor Disputes (RKK) in the 1930s is especially significant.

(b) *The withering away of the RKK and the growth of the power of enterprise managers and industrial cadres over the workers*

The RKK (*ratseoborano-Konfliktivnye komissii*)⁴⁶ first saw the light of day in 1918. At that time they were purely trade union organs that decided wage policy. In 1922 their existence was recognized by the Labor Code but they assumed a balanced structure with an equal number of seats for representatives of the enterprise management and representatives of the union committee. They fulfilled two functions. On the one hand they fixed production norms, made decisions on the classification of posts, qualification scales and other questions relating to working conditions. On the other hand, they had competence in settling any conflict resulting from a collective agreement and in examining any complaint by a worker about his work contract and the application of labor legislation. If not settled in this way the complaint of a worker or group of workers could be passed to arbitration or to the jurisdiction of local organs of the Labor Commissariat (*O Truda*)⁴⁷.

These different functions of the RKK disappeared in the course of the 1930s. Fixing norms and the classifications of posts,

qualifications and wages were removed from their scope. At the same time as collective agreements were being made at the level of each enterprise, wages and norms were fixed by a special department of the management, the wage and norm bureau. In 1933 the Central Council of Trade Unions confirmed this situation.²⁰ One of the trade union leaders at the time Vannberg explained that this decision was taken because of the necessity of ensuring within the enterprise the principle of one-man management and economic planning. He added that to question this decision would imply a 'leftist or rightist deviation' which would be intolerable.²¹

The role of the RKK as organs of arbitration and conciliation also came to an end with the transformation of trade union organizations into mechanisms closely tied to enterprise management and subordinated to a production political line. The last year for which statistics were published pertaining to union versus management disputes submitted to the RKK was 1929-30. In that year, the number of workers involved in disputes initiated by union committees in enterprises was about 1.5 million, a decrease of about 4% percent compared to 1928-29. Subsequently the statistics made no mention of such disputes. Up to 1933 the disputes could still be examined by the Labour Inspector but the Labour Commissioner disappeared in 1933. As a result at this time the tasks of O Trade were handed to the regional trade union councils. These organs disappeared in 1937. When the unions were reorganized their judicial functions also disappeared, they had previously in any case become ineffective.²²

Finally the functions of the RKK and O Trade in the matter of the claims of individual workers or groups of workers were decayed, even though no change in the printed regulations marked this. In fact the increase in the powers of the enterprise managements paralyzed the activity of the RKK. At the same time the massive flow of new workers of peasant origin resulted in the absence of information provided by the unions in their ignorance on the part of the majority of workers and employees that there existed organs other than those of the enterprise administrative services to which they might address their complaints. In the old enterprises, the RKK functioned for a little longer in the early 1930s, but as the work force increased their functions ceased in general they do not seem to have been even established

at construction sites or in new enterprises. An enquiry conducted in 1932 covering fifty enterprises showed that by that time the RkK were almost ignored by the workers and were not even informed about complaints. Those RkK which did exist were run haphazardly and a large proportion of their decisions was annulled by the O Truda²².

From 1935 workers who had complaints to lodge brought about underpayment for overtime, non-payment of bonuses or violations of labor legislation, addressed themselves only to the management. Very exceptionally appeals were made to the courts. But usually no claim was formulated even in cases of wrongful dismissal, and of wages lower than they should have been. Because the circumstances were not right, those who disputed a decision could easily be accused of 'anti-soviet activity'. As well, the tribunals almost systematically decided in favour of enterprise managements so much so that the Justice Commissariat was obliged to call them to order when certain abuses became too blatant. Even the frequency of these calls to order demonstrated their ineffectiveness²³.

In general official ideology and practice made it very difficult for workers openly to draw up a complaint. It was admitted that decisions had to be taken by enterprise managements and the questioning of those decisions—apart from obvious violations of generally accepted regulations—was most often regarded as an attempt to attack the principles of one-man management and as indicative of a lack of discipline on the part of those making the complaint.

Strikes were not forbidden explicitly. But workers were severely punished when they tried to undertake collective action in protest against decisions involving wages, norms and any other aspect of working conditions. The police were intervened and the courts applied Paragraph XIV of Article 58 of the KSPSK Criminal Code or the corresponding articles of the codes of the other republics which provided that

The deliberate non-fulfilment by a worker of his obligations, or their wilfully negligent execution, entailing deprivation of liberty for a period of not less than one year, with total or partial forfeiture of property in the case of especially serious

in the case of the punishment may be the same measure of social defense: death by shooting or confiscation of all property".

The growing and heart-cut support given by the enterprise managements' struggle for higher prices and lower costs, the decay of the RAK and other organs in position to examine workers' complaints, the ignorance which workers were left about their rights, the pressure of threats against workers in the name of the necessity of fulfilling the plans at any price, all entailed consequences leading to the development of a *factory despotism* that was particularly brutal. A statement by M. M. Kaganovich in 1964 states the conception held by party leaders at that time of the powers and functions of the enterprise manager:

In the factory the manager is king. Everyone must be subordinated to him. If the manager does not accept this, if he wants to play the liberal and call himself the brother, if he wants to spend time in prison, then he is not a manager and he must not be in charge of a factory. Everything must be subordinated to the managers. The earth must tremble when the manager goes around the factory".

These words crudely summarize the way in which enterprise managers were required to exercise their functions. They were far removed from Lenin's evocation of the role of a "conducting conductor". It was a case of an absolute authority which stated no opposition within the factory, while being in practice subordinated to the targets fixed for each enterprise by the Party and government targets enshrined in the plans. It was whose ideology for the role of "boss" and "director" which took form at this time and was cultivated in the engineers' and cadres' schools.

This despotism of the factory (the term used by Marc Bloch to define the discipline of a capitalist factory)¹² led to the development of arbitrariness in the matter of workers' wages. Not only these, but production norms also, were fixed unilaterally and the workers lost all control over the way in which their wages

were calculated and the deductions made from them. The latter became especially numerous from 1932 when the principle of "material responsibility" of workers was applied in the case of defective production. Defects could entail significant reductions and even total loss of wages. Such wage reductions occurred even "when defects have not been caused by the fault of the worker" "for example when the raw material was defective."

Other deductions were provided for in cases of work stoppage, even "when the cause has nothing to do with the worker" the latter's wage was reduced (in principle by one half the basic wage in the appropriate category). It was vital that he informed the management immediately about the cause of the stoppage for if he failed to do so he would receive no wage at all and disciplinary punishment might be visited on him.³⁴

The consequences of the hardening of factory despotism made themselves felt also as violations of labor legislation.

(c) Violations of labor legislation

Labor legislation adopted during the early years of the Soviet revolution, codified in 1922, was at the time highly favorable to workers and undoubtedly one of the world's most favorable. During NEP it was in the main applied in practice both the trade unions and the Labor Inspectorate kept an eye on things. The situation began to change as the industrialization plan took form. Violations of the legislation were at first felt in the question of working hours and rest-days, a field regulated by Articles 60 (rest-days), 104-106 (working hours and overtime) and 131 (working hours for pregnant or nursing women).³⁵

From the beginning of the 1930s enterprise managers began to disregard the rules for overtime. Often managers imposed on workers working hours that exceeded sometimes considerably the limits fixed by law and without observing the prescribed procedures (agreement of a parity commission and of the Labor Inspectorate). Similarly, the rules for rest-days were increasingly violated. When things went too far some protests did appear in the press, notably in the Komsomol newspaper but this same also praised factories and mines in which holidays

had been all but abolished and in which overtime stretched a working day to 12 or even 16 hours²⁰.

Most often, violation of rules about working hours and rest days were presented as decisions of the workers in the name of "socialist competition".

There can be no doubt that the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan there was a certain enthusiasm for production, especially on the part of youth, but it would not have been enough to cause such long and frequent increases of working hours. Moreover, the protests that the press from time to time published imply that long extensions of working hours were imposed by enterprise managements with the support of Party organizations even though, usually, the external forms of union democracy were respected, for example, when a workers' meeting was required to vote "for" or "against" the enterprise's plan and to accept working hours that would allow the plan to be fulfilled. "Socialist competition" imposed by enterprise managements became a means of violating labor legislation without anybody daring to oppose the move.

The following example, presented as "positive" by the same union newspaper, shows how far the extension of working hours could be taken:

Competition between the different gangs has taken an extraordinary form. As soon as the first gang has finished work and the second has started, the first strives to help the second. Shattered by fatigue, young men who have finished their first shift lie down even at the place of work on the benches and get up after two or three hours of sleep to continue working²¹.

Repetition of such practices damaged the workers' health and were an important cause of work accidents.

At the start of the Second Five-Year Plan, indifference to the workers' health was on such a scale that workers' discontent made itself felt and compelled the union organizations, in spite of their orientation toward production, to make protests. For example, *Trud* condemned the most blatant abuses and cited the case of the Moscow region foundries where a group

At foundrymen worked an average of 15 hours daily for three months the workers became so tired that they left work when metal was still being poured. It also published an investigation by the metalworkers' union revealing that in the enterprises of a Ukraine trust "workers labor often for 14-16 hours or more and sometimes as much as 20 and even 23 hours. And it reported that in certain mines of the Donetsk Basin a back night shift of 9-10 hours had been imposed".

Against those who refused to work the extra hours the enterprise management applied punishments established for unjustified absence or used the techniques of allocating the most arduous work to them. The articles from time to time published by the press to "denounce" these practices did nothing fundamental to change the situation. In the factories the union organizations continued to collaborate with enterprise managements in the name of "fulfilling the plans and of socialist competition".

The constant violation of rules concerning working hours also had negative consequences on the quality of production even more so as it was added to the increase of production norms. It led to a substantial deterioration of work relationship which would cause Stalin in 1935 to condemn the indifference of the unions to this situation. The latter then responded, but only superficially, by means of simple protests which did nothing to hinder the course of these practices. The same sequence occurred in 1927 when the head of the Trade Unions Central Council, Shvernik, stated that

The abuse of overtime and of rest-days is the area where most violations are committed against labor legislation.⁴³

This declaration changed nothing. Violations of the legislation continued notably in the matter of working conditions for youths under 18 and pregnant women.⁴⁴

Full statistics about work accidents stopped appearing at the beginning of the 1930s, but occasionally newspaper articles made evident the scale of the problem.

Moreover, the regulations for safety and accident prevention at work were likewise not respected by enterprise managements.

for their part the party and trade union organizations accepted this situation. The union press reported the extreme cases, but such formal protests had no effect on common practices.

Among the cases described by the union press may be mentioned the presence of noxious gases in numerous work places, sometimes reaching ten times the authorized maximum; lack of sufficient air supply in factories and mines; excessive visibility; unprotected machines; lack of insulation for high tension cables, and so on.²¹

After 1936 the negative consequences from the point of view of the authorities themselves or discredited for ideological reasons were such that many enterprise managers and officials were condemned for having allowed the situation to develop in these ways. They were then accused of being enemies of the people and saboteurs, even though the exact nature of the fatality plans imposed on the factories could only be more or less fulfilled by violating safety regulations. The 'Great Machine trials' indicated up to a point the scale of damage and even of catastrophes (mainly on the railroads and mines) that had been entailed by the policy of output growth at all price. The accused in the trials confessed that it was the instructions given by themselves that serious sabotage was perpetrated (they declared that they had acted as agents of imperialist powers, Nazi Germany, Japan, etc.).²² The real story of these confessions has often been shown.²³ It is clear that this aspect of the trials was aimed at the deep frustration of the workers, the deterioration of working and living conditions being blamed on the officials' responsibility.

It would appear that the sentences pronounced at the conclusions of the various trials were not enough to put a halt to the multiplication of work accidents and catastrophes, for accidents and catastrophes were due to the way in which the struggle for production was conducted. Nevertheless the authorities continued to strive for the full limit at any price of the industrial and manual plans despite the negative effects that this in the end had on the situation of production and living because of the enormous wastage of human and material resources entailed by this way of doing things.

Problems which developed in these ways cannot be explained simply by the blind pursuit of output. They have also a

class character. They were the affirmation, carried to extremes, of the authority of the power-holders: managers, and cadres who wished to break the resistance (including even passive resistance) of the workers, and impose on them factory discipline of a most pronounced type. These practices demonstrate a terrible score for the workers which took the form of denouncing the 'Petty bourgeois outlook of workers who did not accept the orders of enterprise managers and who were often treated as "class enemies" as such they could be sentenced to deportation, and to penal or penitentiary labor.

The contradictions fostered by these practices were however so deep that the Party - while not attacking them at their roots - was occasionally obliged to have enterprise managers punished. The end of the 1930s was marked by penal sentences against directors and engineers accused of sabotage, notably when accidents of excessive severity had occurred. But repression bore also on workers who denounced 'penalties' (that is, before rather than after an accident) violations of work safety regulations.⁴⁰

Violation of labor legislation and the multiplication of accidents at factories, mines and construction sites stemmed from a violent anti worker offensive and from an unrestrained struggle for increased growth and immediate profitability of enterprises. The judgement that Marx made about the functioning of capitalism can be unreservedly applied here, notably where he writes that it is more than any other system of production a waste of men of living work, a squandering of flesh and blood and also of nerves and brains.⁴¹

These characteristics of capitalism developed during the 1930s in factories employing free workers.⁴² It will be seen that in conditions of forced labor they assumed gigantic proportions.

(c) The toughening of labor discipline

The severity of labor regulations intensified throughout the 1930s. The evolution of punishments inflicted on workers for unjustified absence⁴³ and the definition of such an absence demonstrate the toughening of labor discipline.

•By virtue of Article 47 of the labor Code, as it was revised in August 1927 the fact of having been absent for a total of three days in one month, without such absence being properly authorized or justified for medical reasons, was punished by dismissal without notice or compensation. On November 15 1932 Art. 47 was revised by a decision of the Central Executive Committee and of Sovnarkom. Henceforth, a single day of absence without cause for dismissal without notice or compensation. The enterprise management was not only authorized to apply this punishment, but was required to do so.

Punishments for unjustified absence became more severe by virtue of this decree as well as by a directive of November 1932 and another decree of December 4.²¹ Among new punishments applicable to cases of unjustified absence the expulsion of a "guilty person" from his lodgings, if the latter were provided by the enterprise, should be mentioned. The decree specified that this sanction was to be applied equally to the family and was to take no account of the unavailability of alternative accommodation, but of the season (which means that this punishment was especially serious in winter) nor of the absence of means of transport. This dismissal was additionally accompanied by the withdrawal of ration cards. At that time this was a measure of extreme gravity for without a ration card recourse could only be made to the "free market" where prices were exorbitant.

A subsequent decree (dated June 27 1933) specified that the expulsions from accommodation would take place even if the latter did not belong to the enterprise but had been put at the disposal of its personnel by a housing or house-building cooperative.²²

Following the adoption of the measure the average annual number of working days lost by unjustified absence per worker fell from 5.95 in 1932 to 0.93 in 1933 and 0.67 in 1934.²³

In spite of this change—which was maintained in the following years—a campaign was begun during the fall of 1938 against the "shirkers" (*prokubshiki*), "idlers", and other "greedy individuals". On December 28, 1938 this campaign culminated in the adoption of a new decree "for strengthening labor discipline, improving the application of work insurance and combating absence in these fields."²⁴

This text was an important step toward the penalization of labor law. Henceforward, any late arrival at work, any early departure at midday or in the evening, any "loafing" had to be punished. The punishments were warning, reprimand, severe reprimand with threat of subsequent punishment, transfer to less well paid work for up to three months and dismissal. Any wage-earner who was the object of three disciplinary measures in one month or of four in two consecutive months was considered guilty of unjustified absence and had to be punished for the latter offence.

On January 8, 1939 a new decision of the government, the Party and the Central Council of Trade Unions on a more hardened the regulation of labor⁷⁶. By virtue of this text any lateness of more than 20 minutes was regarded as "unjustified absence" and punished as such. At the end of 1938 prison sentences were pronounced against managements or enterprise cadres who had failed to punish workers liable to punishment under Articles 109 and 111 of the Penal code⁷⁷. In the following weeks thousands of dismissals were pronounced for "unjustified absence".⁷⁸

Fear of disciplinary sanctions then became a constant worry of many workers. Some of them gave up their midday meal so as not to risk a late arrival after the break. Visits to medical services and dispensaries became less frequent because the workers feared punishment after not being recognized as ill. Pressure was put at the same time on the doctors so that the number of sick notes issued at the beginning of 1939 fell by 50 per cent which the press regarded as a victory over "malingerers".⁷⁹

Thus the measures taken at the end of 1938 and beginning of 1939 had above all a repressive nature: it was a matter of putting workers in a situation of strict subordination. A supplementary step was taken toward the virtual penalization of labor law with the adoption of the law of June 26, 1940, whose Article 5 provided that an "unjustified absence" would give rise to judicial Prosecution and would be punished by "correctional labor" carried out at the place of work for a maximum of six months and with a deduction from wages that could go as high as 25 percent⁸⁰. It has already been seen that from September 1940 "correctional labor" was regarded as an

interruption of employment and could result in the worker losing a great part of his previously won social security rights.

The Justice Commissariat and the procuracy required the courts to stretch to a maximum the definition of "unjustified absence" "loafing" during working hours thereby qualified as unjustified absence. Also to be obligatorily considered as guilty of unjustified absence were those who did not observe their management's decisions about work to be done in overtime or on holidays even if the overtime was ordered illegally, because it was not the workers' place to "judge whether the conditions required for working overtime are present". Also punished for unjustified absence were workers absent from work with the permission of the management "if it later transpired that the requested authorization, granted in good faith, was objectively illegal". It did not correspond to a case where absence could be authorized.²⁸

Fearing that certain courts were hesitating to apply the law of June 26, 1940 in all its rigor, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet accepted, on August 15, 1940, a decision that required judges to consider only the fact of "unjustified absence" it was thereby forbidden to "take account of favorable testimony about an accused showing that he was an exemplary worker, a stakhanovite etc. because it was stated 'those who absent themselves from work "could not possibly be Stakhanovites or exemplary workers..."'.²⁹

As a result of such directives, even sick or injured workers were sentenced for "unjustified absence" so much so that in December 1940 new directives were issued that sought to avoid the most shocking sentences. At the same time the judges were reminded that they should not display "leniency" and that the provisions of the Penal Code concerning reductions and suspensions of sentences did not apply "in cases of 'unjustified absence' (and it might be recalled that these cases even involved workers accused of 20 minutes' 'loafing')".

The provisions of the law of June 26, 1940 which provided for prison sentences in case of "voluntary" absence took force until April 1955³⁰.

The ideological relationships that were predominant within the privileged strata at the beginning of the 1940s are demonstrated in a meaningful way by readers' letters to *Izvestiya*, demanding that domestic servants be made liable to the law of June 26, 1940. The editors of *Izvestiya* did not think that such an application was practicable but did not seem to be surprised at receiving such a demand.⁴³

Thus it may be said that in the 1930s there took place a radical change in working conditions. Measures concerning hiring and firing, compulsory transfers of jobs, organized recruitment and instituting a very severe factory despotism, gave an unprecedented powers to those who controlled access to means of production and the utilization of the resultant products. The anti-worker offensive also affected (as will be seen later) wage and norm fixing and the development of norms and wages. It tightly bound the workers to the requirements of accumulation and the utilization of the means of production.

While affirming that this situation was that of "achieved socialism," the leading Party condemned all questioning of the existing order as "counter revolutionary." The defeat suffered by the workers was both social and political.

III. The transformation of the conditions of the workers' struggle and the veritable "nationalization" of the trade unions

For a proper understanding of the way in which the conditions of the workers' struggle changed in the 1930s, a brief recapitulation is necessary.

As is well-known, in the period of "war communism" there was a strong tendency towards "nationalization" of the trade unions—that is, their complete subordination to the state apparatus so that they could participate to the fullest extent in the struggle for output.⁴⁴ At the end of 1920 Lenin condemned this tendency. He affirmed the dual nature of the Soviet state and indicated that this required that the unions were sufficiently independent to enable the workers to "protect themselves against their state."⁴⁵ A little later he opposed Trotsky and

Butkharin who—in the name of a “production take-off”—had reproached him for preoccupied himself with “formal democracy.” Replying to these criticisms Lenin recalled that it was necessary to allow the unions to defend the workers so that the latter could fulfil their production tasks.²⁰ In March 1922 the Tenth Congress of the Party adopted by a substantial majority resolutions in line with this position. The latter was confirmed in January 1922 when the CC voted for a resolution formulated by Lenin that emphasized “that there existed necessarily a certain conflict of interests in matters concerning labor conditions between the masses of workers and the directors and managers of the state enterprises or the government departments in charge of them; hence even in state enterprises it was undoubtedly the duty of the trade unions to protect the interests of the working people”.²¹

In reality this position and the consequences that flowed from it were only partially accepted by some party cadres and enterprise managers. Realizing the social tension that this position engendered, the Fourteenth Congress in December 1925 reaffirmed that the main task of the unions was the defense of the economic interests of the masses. Simultaneously there was condemnation of the tendency to form an “unstable truce” between the economic and union organs. It was concluded that this tendency weakened trade union discipline.²²

Nevertheless this tendency remained a work despite the positions of principle that had been adopted.

At the time the industrialization policy was launched these positions of Principle were themselves abandoned which was not without practical consequences. The change of direction of that time explicitly obliged unions to give priority to output and compelled them to get rid of most of the old union leaders, notably Tomsky, replaced by Shverdak.²³ This rupture was entirely carried out from above by decisions that the Party imposed on the unions.

The decisions taken then killed the belief for the NEP attempt to leave a certain initiative to the union cadres. Henceforth the latter had above all to obey the central organs of the Party. They had to conform with the orders that they received from the Party—in particular those involving production tasks, productivity increases and labor discipline.

(a) *The Sixteenth Congress (June-July 1930),
the role of the trade unions and
the struggle for industrialization*

The Sixteenth Congress confirmed the large-scale elimination, carried out from above, of the great majority of the old union leaders. In uncompromising language typical of the man, L. Kaganovich declared to the Congress that

The great majority of the leadership of the Central Council of the Trade Unions, and of the separate unions, have been replaced. Some might say that this is a violation of proletarian democracy but, comrades, it has long been known that for us Bolsheviks democracy is not a fetish.¹⁰

This formulation by Kaganovich is explained by the fact that the 'purge' of the unions was not carried out by the unions themselves, but entrusted to the Party Central Commission and to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (RAI) at the request of the Central Council of Trade Unions as it was expressed in the "Union Resolution" passed by the Sixteenth Congress.¹¹

This resolution accused the old leadership of having followed an 'opportunist and trade unionist' orientation that was incompatible with the requirements of the "reconstruction period". It affirmed the need to continue the struggle against such an orientation and called on Party organizations to ensure a "concrete direction" for trade union activity.¹²

This last formulation broke with the position expressed in the previous principle, which demanded that the Party should exercise a "general direction", avoiding what Lenin termed 'paltry bureaucratism' and "troublemaking interference in the unions".¹³

In sum the "Union Resolution" aimed at making the unions into instruments for carrying out the plans. The central paragraph of the text is titled "Getting down to production".¹⁴ It detailed the unions' task in this field. It insisted on the organization of socialist competition and on the role of shock brigade workers (*udarniki*). Paragraphs devoted to improvement of

workers' material living conditions and in full employment, work occupied only a secondary place. It was clear that activity in these fields was regarded as simply a means of increasing production. All this was in accordance with the ideas emanating from industry and the economic administrators.

At the beginning of 1931, the VSNKh newspaper suggested that the unions should be split up so that they would be 'harmonious' with the organization of the main industries, so that the unions would "readily have their eyes fixed on the put and could succeed in establishing conditions higher than those in force!" (In January 17 the newspaper, the Central Council of Trade Unions (*Trud*) declared that a special committee of the Central Council had arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to split up the unions. At the end of January 1931, after a report presented by Shvachkin, the Central Council adopted a decision which increased the number of union federations from 24 to 44 without even having consulted them. After this reorganization, the powers of the plenary assembly of the Central Council were reduced in favour of the Presidium of this Council. The Presidium was itself put under the direct control of the Party Politburo. The whole trade union reorganization was carried out from above. It also led to a financial centralization. Henceforth all the union funds were in the hands of the Central Council, which was required to distribute them between the different union organizations."

In fact, after the end of 1929 and again after the XVth Congress, the unions concentrated their attention on production, growth, on 'socialist competition' and on the raising of productivity. They went as far as denouncing workers who tried to cross these narrownesses. The trade union presses commonly described such workers as 'self-seekers' and sometimes published their names with a recommendation to 'enterprise not to hire them'.

The desire to achieve at any price production plans that were extremely ambitious (and partly unrealistic) and to increase the profits of state enterprises so as to provide finance for a very heavy investment program led the Party—especially in spring 1931—to demand that the unions conduct a campaign for an increase of work norms and for wage limitation. In taking this path, the unions were led to denounce workers as well as

factory managers opposed to increased work norms⁹⁸ and this increase usually led to a wage reduction, to the deterioration of working conditions and even to a decline of output quality.

Such practices, and the total indifference of the unions to the living conditions of the workers, ruined their prestige and authority among workers. If the latter remained unionized, it was essentially because of the pressure put upon them and also so as to benefit from the material advantages obtained by possession of a union card. Finally, these union practices damaged production itself so that in June 1931 Stalin had to give a reminder that the improvement of working and living conditions of workers was essential for the growth of output.⁹⁹

This reminder gave rise to numerous union 'self-criticisms'. For example, in a declaration made at the time of the August meeting of the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions, *Trud* wrote:

The trade union leaders had come to regard it as bad taste and perhaps even opportunistic to concern themselves with the vital needs of the workers. In the tractor plants the union organizations have become malignant growths of the managements and have their trade union character.

The next day the same newspaper returned to the same question (*italic added*)

Many union organizations misunderstand the political importance of the struggle for the systematic improvement of the workers' living conditions *insofar as it influences the success of socialist construction*. This misunderstanding is at the bottom of the characteristic attitude that many worker organizations adopt, showing lack of interest in many horrifying facts that have so disastrous a repercussion on the execution of the industrial and financial plan.¹⁰⁰

These 'self-criticisms', although inspired by anxieties about output, had few effects. The immediate primacy of output led the unions to worry more about that than about working conditions.

They accepted their subordination to the central economic organs. They changed themselves into appendages of these and even condemned factory managers who granted 'unjustified' wage increases. At the beginning of 1932, *Trud* stigmatized local unions which behaved differently, writing of their "complicity" with enterprise managements who 'have taken the road of unjustified wage increases' ¹⁰¹

In February 1932 the Federation of Engineering Construction Workers attacked factory managers who allowed wage increases when the production plan had not been fulfilled. It went as far as requesting the Procuracy to bring criminal proceedings against these managers. ¹⁰²

The "vigilance" of the unions with regard to "excessiveness of wages" was all the greater since they themselves were also held responsible for these excesses. They thereby became a state organ with the "policing of wages" ¹⁰³

In 1932, as the end of the First Five-Year Plan approached, the race for output growth accelerated and led more than ever to unions being regarded as organs charged above all with the fulfilment of the plan, including the financial plan. They were very frequently opposing wage increases, which would have reduced enterprises' profit margins. As will be seen, this contributed to a reduction of real wages whilst the Five-Year Plan had provided for an increase.

(b) *The Ninth Trade Union Congress (April 1932) and the "takeover" of the unions by the state*

The Ninth Congress of Trade Unions met in April 1932, in a fully "productivist" atmosphere.

Here Kaganovich once more condemned the former union leadership, eliminated three years previously, criticizing its "Menshevik-Trotskyist" attitude that "put the workers' interests against those of socialist industry". Shvernik insisted on the tasks that the unions had to carry out resolutely, notably the greatest possible extension of piecework with wage rates based on technical norms.

In total, the reports presented to the Congress emphasized that the unions were to devote themselves to the mobilization

of all working class strength for the expansion of socialist construction at an accelerated rhythm" and that they were not to sacrifice this activity for the sake of 'protective' tasks, according to the formulation used to condemn the activity of Tomsky and other former union leaders.¹⁰

The union line fixed by the Ninth Congress—a line which carried further previous practices—confirmed that Soviet workers were by this time deprived of any organization that could help them to struggle at the workplace for their interests and their working conditions. This was a great historical regression which helped to destroy the working class as a self-conscious class. This led to serious consequences for the workers and even for output itself, so much so that it inevitably produced a crisis that took the form of a 'trade union crisis'. This crisis was such that sixteen years were to elapse before the Tenth Trade Union Congress met (in 1949).¹¹ This Congress moreover did not change anything fundamental in the role of the unions as auxiliaries of enterprise managements and of the government.¹²

However, at the beginning of the 1930s the pressure put on the unions by the Party and the government—and the purges which struck trade unionists considered as "opportunists"—did not succeed in preventing militant unionists, especially those of them who were close to the worker grassroots, from trying to resist the application of the 'productivist' line. An echo of this resistance may be found in various statements by the leaders of the Central union apparatus. For example in 1933 Gavril Veinberg stated:

We must fight the bad trade unionists who distort the Party line with the same severity as the Party itself brings to bear against its opportunists. In the union ranks one sometimes hears remarks like this: 'Is it right for unions to oppose improvements of wages granted by industrial managers? If we do how will we look to the workers?' This is to seriously misunderstand the duties of the unions. This is pure trade-unionism. This kind of defence of the workers' interests must be fought mercilessly.¹³

'Sanctions against bad trade unionists' were not without effect. Enterprise managers sanctioned by the central departments

to increase work norms increased them substantially. The discontent of the working class then often made itself felt in a circumstance that the central organ of the unions vigorously condemned writing for example:

The revision of norms has collided with a substantial resistance from elements of the hostile classes: self-seekers and idlers. It is workers whose living standards have substantially declined who are described in these terms — C.B. Numerous reports have had to be made about attacks by class enemies having the aim of preventing the execution of the labor productivity plan. These attacks are various. Sometimes they are threats against employers of the norm fixing offices, sometimes a skilful depression of productivity, sabotage of time-keeping agitation against norm revision or attempts to organize the resistance of certain groups of workers.¹⁰

There could hardly be a better admission of the existence of a movement outside the union organizations of a struggle of workers against the degradation of their living and working conditions.

The counterstroke to this struggle was the liberation of the unions. This state takeover took the form of the opposite: the dissolution of the Labor Commissariats and attribution of its functions to the unions which became a new state administrator. For example, the management of social security and the checking of the observation of safety measures at work, were transferred to the Central Council of Labor Unions. In 1934 the unions were in addition entrusted with the protection of the workers and peasants' interests at the local level and they had to verify the application of Party and government directives concerning production and wages.¹¹

The unions became an enormous apparatus entrusted with many functions. In fact they were transformed into an administrative body subject to the instructions of the Politburo and Secretariat. This transformation however conferred on them a new authority in relation to the workers, especially insofar as they managed social security and the application of labor legislation.

The scale of the union apparatus was then such that a reorganization became necessary. A decision taken in September 1934 by the Party CC (then ratified by the Central Council of Trade Unions) led to a new burst of union federations. At the end of this reorganization there were 154 union federations (in place of 44 in 1931). Later this total would reach 170.¹¹⁰

Clearly, this reorganization did not change the effects of the productivist drive. The latter went so far that it worried even the industrial managers, because lack of attention to working conditions and the resulting discontent had negative repercussions on production. Thus, at the time of a conference of managers of heavy industry, there was a new reproach leveled at the unions for not paying enough attention to the workers' living conditions. In this way, what would be called the "union crisis" signalled its approach.

(c) The "trade union crisis" and its aftermath

At the beginning of 1935 the disaffection and discontent of workers in regard to 'their' trade unions became increasingly evident. The elections to the enterprise union committees took place in an atmosphere of deep indifference, with a very low turn-out. This situation worried the Party leadership. It made it appear that there was a growing rift between the workers and the state apparatus. In addition, this situation meant that the unions were not capable of coping with tasks that had to be correctly performed in order to prevent the existing contradictions in industrial enterprise deepening to the point where they could seriously hamper production.

On May 28 Stalin called a meeting of the Central Council leaders. He placed before them several questions about the confusion in which the elections to enterprise committees had been carried out, the ignorance of those elections which the masses had shown, the lack of "real democracy" which characterized them, and the "bad work" of the unions. He suggested breaking off the elections and preparing new ones to take place in different conditions after the unions had ordered a new program containing "new tasks". He declared that

"the average worker sometimes asks 'do we really need trade unions?' He reproached the latter of useless repetition with the economic organs and enterprise managements, "where the essential task of the unions should be to concentrate all their attention on the cultural and daily needs of the masses."

According to the account of this conversation which was published (but only almost seven months later and which indicated the existence of serious resistance by numerous cadres to the guidelines then sketched) Sta lin also declared:

Caring about the human personality, bringing culture, the daily needs of the working class—that is where trade union preoccupations should be centered.

In the tasks thereby assigned to the unions it was no longer a matter of directing efforts above all to production but rather toward "the cultural and daily needs of the masses." Nor was there further mention of the role of the unions in the determination of working conditions and production.

These declarations opened what would be called the "trade union crisis" and seemed to mark a turning point. In reality the subsequent course of events showed that there was not a turning point but only phrases, and some measures intended to transform part of the union cadres—who were applying the Party line—into "ultra-leftists" offered up as explanatory factors to the discontent of the workers.

What actually happened was that following the conversation of May 26, 1935, the Party CC appointed a committee chaired by L. Kaganovich, entrusted with the reorganization of union activities. This committee operated for several months without the trade unions being publicly informed. Its first decision was to suspend the elections. In November it invited the Central Council of Trade Unions to call a conference in which would take part the central committees of the union fractions. The five central secretaries then publicly condemned the situation and openly admitted that there was a "union crisis." In the record of the conference can be read:

The trade unions are passing through a crisis.
Numerous union members express the justified

discontent' they feel about union activity, they ask what is their aim and how can they serve the proletarian state and the working masses. It is necessary on the part of unionized workers and employees to interpose self-criticism of the most severe and pitiless type - a radical and decisive turning point in union activities. Scope for initiative from below must be allowed for only the working masses will succeed in bringing union activities to the necessary level.¹¹³

It was here that the pursuit of scapegoats began: the conference was followed by a wave of self-criticism by union officials. However this wave was not long in subsiding. During December talk of a union crisis diminished. There was only mention of a 'certain union crisis'. In January 1936 the self-criticism ceased. In fact relationships between the union organizations and the workers deteriorated to such an extent that the existence of anything that could be called 'union life' was impossible.

In any case, during 1936 these union problems retreated into the background. At that time there was beginning a period of acute social and political conflict within the dominant class itself. All the attention of the Party was reserved for the 'great mass' and vast repressive operations. True, the problems that the trade unions should have tackled continued to demand constant attention. Evidence of this can be found in the central and regional press. For example, in *Rebuznik* put, *The Workers Fight*, the newspaper of the Russian Party regional committee.

Specifically, the Party archive of this region contains in the 'USA' - contains correspondence which is very interesting for the light it throws on the nature of the problems posed by the workers in 1936. Thus, one letter in this correspondence refers addressed to the regional Party Committee secretary. Runners by the workers of a factory of the region (a factory to which no name had been given the name of this Party cadre). In these letters, the signatures demanded extremely high wages, inadequate wages, deplorable housing conditions, and condemned the indifference of the union representatives.

For example, the workers of workshop No. 2 of the Kuznetsov Factory wrote:

We have a great request. If you do not interfere, we will all leave work. It is impossible to work further. We do not earn anything. Since the bosses are concerned only with themselves and they receive salaries and give themselves premiums. Melnikova takes their side. For them there are spas, rest homes and sanatoria, but there is nothing for the worker.

In the correspondence received by Rabinovich, we found a letter sent to him by Melnikova. The letter set herself against accusations made against her and her actions in letters sent to Rabinovich. Putting up with the charges, she claims that she has no means of supporting demands addressed to the union, especially concerning the housing problem. Thus she writes:

It is not possible to repair the quarters of the workers. Safranovskaya says the worker lives in a piece of straw for hay and the place is rotting. The whole roof is in and all the timbers are rotting. We begged the proper organization to give her an apartment. It turned to the city soviet. Gennadiy Puzanov answered that there were no rooms. There must be rooms for satisfied people among us at the factory. Some were investigated 1843 workers' quarters and found out that we have 43 workers who need quarters. We live under very bad conditions and the 205 apartments need repairs.

These people come to the factory committee to get repairs for apartments and I have to refuse them. They in turn tell me that they will write to Rabinovich. Put', will write to you.¹¹⁷

What the result of this correspondence was is unknown. It shows the exasperation of certain workers toward union representatives. Some months later the union, obviously intended to moderate this exasperation, struck a deal with part of the Party and union cadres in Arkhansk, apparently. Evidently this was not enough to solve the difficulties with which the workers were struggling, nor to establish the relationship of trust between them and their union representatives.

In fact, despite the purges, the discontent of workers in regard to their union organizations deepened. At the beginning of 1937 the Party again attacked 'scapegoats'. This time it was the union representatives at the regional level who were accused. The first accusations were made in March 1937 against the union council of Leningrad region. For example the secretary of the regional Party committee declared:

The activity of the regional union council is completely rotten. One cannot see any sign of democracy in it. In many meetings of the plenum the statutory quorum was not reached and there have been many cases when Comrade Alekseev, president of the union council, has sat quite alone.

To which Alekseev replied:

There can be no doubt that there is no other organization in our country where the principles of democracy are flagrantly abandoned more than in the unions. The most blatant violations are considered normal. As a general rule, holders of union offices have been appointed from above.¹²⁰

Some days later Shvernik condemned in his turn 'the far getting at the rights and needs of union members' and added:

The unions have stopped dealing about the workers' protection and security. Union activity among the masses is in a state of complete decay.

All these statements convey the disarray of the political and union cadres in a situation where the union organizations were unable to fulfill (lacking both credibility and listeners) the role that the authorities wished to assign to them.

It was in this situation that the signal was given for a new 'self-criticism' campaign. Shvernik set the example at the meeting of the Plenum of the Central Council of April 27, 1937.¹²¹ His contribution illustrates the state of decay in which the unions found themselves.¹²²

The Sixth Plenum decided that a draft statute should be prepared for the unions and submitted to a Seventh Plenum not later than July 1. In fact, the social crisis was too deep for this decision to have any result, even in a formal sense. A new plenum met only in September 1936, and no statute was submitted to it.¹²²

The Sixth Plenum also decided that the unions had to be "democratized" and that the secret ballot should be introduced for union meetings. In practice, this decision had no more effect than the others; choice of candidates was made at public meetings and the open vote was adopted for election of lower union officials as well as for those who served as auxiliaries of the labor inspectorate.¹²³

Finally, all the backwash created in the name of the "minor crisis" changed nothing, and did not prevent the growth of workers' discontent. To cope with this discontent, the path of repression was increasingly chosen.

Thus from the Eighteenth Party Congress, in March 1939 union questions received little attention. Unions were mentioned only in passing, alongside other organizations which were asked to contribute to the "development of socialist competition and the Stakhanovite movement" and to ensure firm discipline and high labor productivity.¹²⁴

The actual "nationalization" of the trade unions facilitated a substantial deterioration in the living and working conditions of the working class, which will be seen when examining the development of the wage system, work norms, and the level of real wages.

IV Transformation of the wage and norm-fixing principles and some effects of this transformation

Throughout NEP it had been acknowledged that the development of production and the raising of the technical level of industry would have to be accompanied by a progressive leveling of wages. This principle was still accepted by the Seventh and Eighth trade union congresses.¹²⁵ In 1929, after the elimination

of the union leaders following the Eighth Congress, this principle of progressive wage leveling (inherited from the revolutionary ideology of 1917) was increasingly rejected. An opposite principle triumphed, that of "struggle against leveling."

(d) *The "struggle against leveling"*

The most systematic formulations on this question may be found in Stalin's words to a conference of industrial managers on June 23, 1931.

This speech—which at the time was often referred to as enunciating "the six new conditions of socialist construction"—included a violent attack against "the leftist practice of wage equalization" and insisted on the need for wage differentiation. He criticized the "egalitarians" who ignored the difference between skilled and unskilled work.¹²⁹ He emphasized "personal responsibility" in production and the need for "incentives for increasing the productivity of labor."¹³⁰ He also insisted on the necessity of profitability and a growth of accumulation within industry.¹³¹

In the following years, enterprise managers and union cadres strove to put these principles into practice. They sought to use them as a means of combatting the fast rise of costs which characterized—despite the introduction of modern production techniques—1931 and 1932.¹³²

At the Ninth Congress of trade unions (April 1932) Shvermk declared:

The six conditions of Comrade Stalin constitute the militant program of the union movement. He affirmed that the maximum introduction of piece rates on the basis of technical production norms is the most important union task.¹³³

Piece rates thus ceased to be officially regarded as a temporary measure. They were put forward as inherently socialist. As for the formulations of Marx declaring that "piece wage is the form of wage most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production," this was not mentioned. Nevertheless, for those

who acknowledge these formulations, the generalization of piece-rates reveals the extension of capitalist relationships in the 1930s.

Wage differentiation was extolled both as a means of increasing production and of encouraging the formation of technical cadres. For example, receiving a delegation of metallurgists on December 26, 1934, Stalin enunciated the formula:

It is necessary to organize wages so as to strengthen the decisive links of production and to impel people towards higher qualifications — that is what we must do in order to create a numerous army of technical cadres for production.¹³³

Differentiation of wages in accordance with qualifications and industries was also highly revealing of the predominant type of social relationships. It portrayed the labor force as operating in effect as commodity whose current price depended on its reproduction cost and was influenced by supply and demand.

The struggle of the Party against leveling was part of a total perspective. It aimed at a differentiation of workers' wages¹³⁴ and at the growth of the gap between the wages of immediate producers and those of enterprise managers, engineers, technicians and administrators. It will be seen what effects this struggle had on the real differentiation of wages and on the general picture of social relationships.

From 1931 the "struggle against leveling" was tightly bound up with an effort aimed at raising production norms assigned to workers, which were indeed raised several times. But the question of norms revision was especially conspicuous during the Second Five-Year Plan.

(a) *The upward revision of production norms*

From the beginning of the First Five Year Plan the Party leadership put considerable pressure on all cadres to persuade them to obtain an increase in labor's output, by means of increasing its intensity and productivity. It was not surprising

question of increasing production but also of reducing production costs and improving enterprise profitability. The pressure that increased on many enterprise managers to increase production norms by 10 or 20 percent which had the effect of reducing the wages of those workers who failed to increase their output in accordance with the increased norms applicable to them. Such norm increases occurred from 1929 and 1930. Enterprise managements which followed this course justified themselves by reference to the higher output obtained by shock workers (*udarniki*) taking part in socialist competition.

In 1931 and 1932 the raising of norms continued. The Party and the managing economic organizations tried in this way to compensate increased prime costs by a lowering of wage costs, the former being connected with the entry into production of a mass of inexperienced workers and to the disorganization of enterprises and construction sites resulting from the exaggerated scale of the tasks assigned to them.¹²

A certain resistance to increased norms then made itself felt. It appeared not only in the working class but also in various organs entrusted up to them with establishing production norms, but they wanted to take into account the effects of these increased norms on workers' health. This resistance was severely condemned by the Party leadership and its ideologists, especially after the spring of 1931.

In April 1931 the "Langer theory" was criticized in the name of a Marxist-Leninist conception of the physiology of work. For example, S. Kaplan, chief of the Institute of Worker Protection, lashed out at the physiologists who, according to him, seriously overestimated the subjective feeling of fatigue. He, S. Kaplan, claimed that this "subjective factor" could be overcome by an effort of will and that work continued in spite of fatigue was not bad for the workers' health. S. Kaplan did not hesitate to describe as "class enemies" those who defended a contrary opinion. He wrote, in particular:

The activation of hostile elements among a sector of the scientists reflects the class enemy's bitter resistance to the present offensive of the proletariat. Decisively beaten all along the economic front, the class enemy thinks he can hold the last trench line.

on a few sectors of the ideological front. There need be no doubt that he will also be crushed in this his final position.¹²⁷

Such formulations are typical of the recourse to a "proletarian ideology," constructed of all kinds of ingredients, to control the policy of work intensification and the growth of exploitation to which the workers were subjected. These formulations were in preparation for the new campaign that was conducted for the raising of work norms. Thus, on the occasion of the fourteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, the *Kumol* of the Heavy Industry commissariat declared:

Bolshevism must enter into scientific and technical calculations as a new category overturning all previous views of the bases of such calculations.¹²⁸

These standpoints began a rupture that was progressively more complete with the previous practices for fixing production norms, practices which had tried to keep in mind the need for leisure time during the working day so as to avoid an excessive intensification of work.

It was in these conditions that new partial revisions of production norms appeared in 1932 and 1933. However the quest for increased industrial profits, required to cope with ever higher investment,¹²⁹ led the Party to demand, in a resolution adopted in 1934 by the Seventeenth Congress, a reorganization of the wage system,¹³⁰ and then, at the opening of 1935, a substantial upward revision of production norms.¹³¹

The Stakhanovite movement, which began with the record output of August 31, 1935 by the miner Aleksei Stakhanov,¹³² made it possible to proceed to new and large upward revisions of the norms. These revisions were obtained by steering clear of the outputs obtained by average workers; for the records of the Stakhanovites became one of the factors taken into account in establishing new production norms. Thus was abandoned the principle, more or less accepted until then, by which the output of the average worker was one of the main bases for the calculation of production norms.

The establishment of norms fixed in these new conditions was demanded by Stalin in a speech he made on November

17, 1935 at a conference of Stakhanovites. In this speech he gave a definition of the Stakhanovite movement by declaring that it should open the way to an upward revision of the production and productivity plans. He advanced the following formulations:

The Stakhanovite movement is a movement of male and female workers who set themselves the target of exceeding the existing technique, norms, of exceeding the forecast output capacities of exceeding the current plans of production and balances. This movement overthrows the old way of regarding technique. It overthrows the old technical norms, the old forecast output capacities. It demands new, higher technical norms, output capacities, production plans. It has been summoned to make a revolution in our industry.¹⁴³

After affirming that "male and female workers" (by which must be understood Stakhanovites) had already rejected the old technical norms,¹⁴⁴ Stalin contrasted the Stakhanovites with workers who wanted to hold on to the old norms, whom he described as "retarded masses."¹⁴⁵ But he recognized that there was resistance among workers by indicating that "certain workers have attacked Stakhanov for his innovations."¹⁴⁶

Finally, Stalin demanded that new norms be adopted that took account of the production "records" without being total alignment with them.¹⁴⁷

At the beginning of 1936 the work norms were substantially increased. Simultaneously some piecework wage-rates were reduced.¹⁴⁸

At the same time the Central Institute of Labor (which customarily checked the compatibility of norms with workers' health) was abolished.¹⁴⁹ It had put up some opposition to these revisions.

In 1937-38 the production norms were again increased. A growing number of workers were not able to fulfil the manual work that had been imposed and thereby lost part of their wages. In 1938 80 percent of metallurgical workers could not reach their norms. The same applied in 1940 for 22 to 32 percent of workers in all industries.¹⁵⁰

It should be emphasized that during the 1930s and especially after 1936, the number of norms was multiplied. For example, in 1939 in the Machine and Vehicle Construction Commissariat alone there were 2 026 000 norms.¹³¹

At the end of the 1930s more than 75 percent of wage-earners were on piece-rates (of whom about three-sevenths received a progressive piece-wage)¹³² about 10 percent received a wage with bonuses; only a minority were on a simple time-rate.

(c) *Wage differentiation and the
"economic atomization" of the workers*

The struggle against the alleged leftist equalization of wages and the multiplication of norms and of the ways of calculating the receipts of the workers, led to an increased differentiation in the working class's living conditions and to an "economic atomization" of that class.

The starting point of this change was the growing extension of wage categories. Whilst by virtue of decisions taken in 1928 there were eight categories for workers' wages, the number of these scales was sometimes increased, during the 1930s to eleven (for example, in the mines and metallurgy).¹³³

The complexity of the system was increased by the existence of three distinct wage scales, according to whether it was a matter of piece-work within mass production, piece-work outside mass production, or hourly work.¹³⁴

The differences in reality between workers' wages were increased still more by the existence of different basic wages according to industries, locations, and enterprises. In fact each year, the government and the central economic organs fixed the amount, in money terms, by hour or by day of the wage corresponding to the first scale for each enterprise. They fixed at the same time the maximum amount of wages the enterprise was allowed to pay out. In practice it is impossible to calculate the maximum coefficient of inequality, but was certainly much more than 10 in 1936 at the level of the average enterprise. Obviously it was greater at the level of individual wages.

One example illustrates the size of wage differentials towards the middle of the Second Five-year Plan, at a time when the 'Stakhanovite movement' was having its first effects.

The differentials between the extremes of pay for workers belonging to different industries were obviously greater. In fact in 1936 about two or three million workers received less than 100 rubles per month¹⁵⁶ whilst 'Stakhanovites' of the Kuganovich factory in Moscow received several hundred rubles per month, upto 1,800 rubles.¹⁵⁷

By causing a drop in the wages of those who could not achieve the new norms,¹⁵⁸ as was the case for numerous workers, the 'Stakhanovite movement' helped to increase wage inequalities.

However the growth of these inequalities was far from solely attributable to the influence of 'Stakhanovism'. For example from 1934 the growth of such inequalities was a ready noticeable as can be seen from the quoted figures and the statistical analyses by A. Bergson (comparing 1926 and 1934 wages and the distribution by levels of income of Soviet and American wages, Bergson concluded that so far as wage inequalities are concerned, capitalist principles were stronger in the USSR.¹⁵⁹

In 1934 wage inequalities could still appear as 'normal' because numerous products were rationed. It was different after 1935, when rationing was abolished. At that time prices and wages simultaneously rose, but the wage increases benefited the higher paid more than the lower paid.¹⁶⁰

Two more things should be said about the wage system.

(1) First it will be noticed that each people's 'communist' established its own list defining the nature of different jobs and indicating the places they occupied in the wage scale. This list specified the 'qualifications' required to do a given job.¹⁶¹

(2) Secondly, decisions about the education of workers to jobs were taken by boards of workshops or foremen. This practice was confirmed by a decision of the C.I. and S. Secretariat of May 27, 1936. This decision strengthened the power of these instruments of management who also had to check and observe wage rates and work norms to 'improve technique and take rationalization measures'.¹⁶²

The procedures for fixing wages illustrates a clearly important aspect of the development of capitalist relations in the

within state enterprises. A more complete appreciation of the development of these relationships during the 1930s requires, however, that there be taken equally into account the evolution of the intensity and productivity of labor.

(c) The evolution of wages

The complexity and scale of questions raised by an analysis of the evolution of wages during the 1930s means that only a very general view may be taken of this evolution, covering only the real average wage.¹⁰² In fact, because of the growth of wages at equal times, the figures quoted underestimate the decline in the average wage of workers at the bottom of the wage scale. These workers constituted a majority of the working class. At the same time, these figures obscure the growth of real wages for those at the summit of the income pyramid.¹⁰³

The years 1928 and 1933 witnessed severe drops in real average wages. In fact, these years were characterized by very grave shortages of numerous products, and retail prices rose much faster than the nominal average wage. Retail price increases can be estimated only roughly because they varied substantially between the different supply sources (state trade, cooperative trade, or "free market"). Taking into account only the first two categories (although the amounts obtainable from them were insufficient) the real average wage in 1932 had fallen by about 11-12 percent compared to 1928.¹⁰⁴ Authors who have tried to take into account the evolution of retail prices other than official prices and of the need to obtain supplies at such prices, arrive at the drop considerably greater than that of the real average wage, on the order of 30 percent.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless it seems that this presents a somewhat too dark picture of the fall experienced in 1932 by the real consumption of the working class.¹⁰⁶

The fall registered between 1928 and 1932 for the average real wage was obviously in complete contradiction to the forecasts of the Five Year Plan.¹⁰⁷ Nothing was said about this in the official report of the results of this plan. In the report on the plan that he presented on January 7, 1933 to the Plenum of the CC, Stalin claimed that the "average annual wage of

workers and employees in large-scale industry has grown by 61 percent compared to 1928¹⁰ which was only true for the nominal wage.

In 1933 the average real wage again fell: this was the year when the food supply crisis was most grave. It is not possible to put forward a statistically based evaluation of this new fall for no meaningful figure is available covering the evolution of prices in the state and cooperative sectors. However, it may be said that agricultural prices on the free (kulak) market then grew by 40 percent whilst the average nominal wage grew by only 9.7 percent.¹¹ In 1934 the average real wage was still below that of 1932 although it is impossible to put a figure to it.¹²

Rationing was entirely abolished in October 1935 and state and cooperative trade prices were increased. This increase of prices affected above all the workers, for whose purchases made in the framework of rationing had been a main source of food-supply. The extreme variety of prices which were typical of 1934 makes impossible a statistically-based evaluation of the change in the real average wage.¹³

In 1937 it can be estimated the average real wage of workers and employees was about 30.60 percent of the 1926 level (or the 1927-28 level).¹⁴ which was an improvement of about 20 percent compared to 1932. This was far from the targets of the Second Five Year Plan (1933-7) which forecast a doubling of the real average wage in industry.¹⁵

Judging from the price and wage statistics the real average wage grew in 1938 and 1939. In fact shortages returned around the black market¹⁶ so it is probable that the real average wage did not in fact increase in those two years. In 1940 even ignoring the shortages the real wage was about 10 percent lower than in 1937.¹⁷ The Third Five Year Plan (1938-42) which forecast an increase of 35 percent for real wages was no more 'achieved' in this field than it had been in the previous plans.¹⁸

Finally in 1940 the real average wage of industrial workers and employees was about 32.57 percent of that of 1926.¹⁹

Many other indices of the material situation of urban workers make equally clear a substantial decline in the living conditions of the latter. Thus the number of square meters of

accommodation available per town inhabitant fell from 1.42 between 1927-28 and 1937-38. However, the situation of workers, especially manual workers, was much worse. These figures suggest, for example, in Moscow where 4 per cent of tenants (that is, households of one or more persons) had more than one room, 40 per cent had only one, and 23.6 per cent occupied part of a room (i.e. as the term was at the time a 'corner'). 5 per cent lived in a corridor or kitchen, and 25 per cent in dormitories, usually wooden barracks.¹⁰

The situation was just as catastrophic outside the capital. In Smolensk, a report of the Party committee and the city soviet that furnished this report illustrates the crisis: it is stated that workers accommodated in barracks. The latter were overcrowded and badly maintained. Often water leaked at the night on to the workers' beds. Sanitary facilities were practically non-existent. At construction sites there were neither kitchen nor canteens. A female Party member pointed out that many women workers 'lived virtually on the street, some of them threatened to commit suicide'.¹¹

It should be added that during the first three Five Year Plans an increasing proportion of workers was deprived of the benefits of social legislation. In fact, henceforth the law was applied without restrictions only to workers who had not sufficiently long in the same enterprise and had not been penalized for 'unqualified absence'. In addition, priority for holiday homes were reserved, and priority was given to 'Stakhanovites'. So between 1928 and 1937 the real average wage and the social benefits of mass workers were in a decline.

The Stakhanovite movement developed in the face of this decline and on the spread of piece rates and bonuses. It consisted of workers who achieved exceptional output. Stakhanovism was a way of escaping difficult living conditions, even for obtaining an exceptional level of consumption.

While the real average wage declined by more than 40 per cent between 1928 and 1937, the productivity and intensity of its raised considerably, and hence there was a substantial over-exploitation of industrial workers.¹²

The general development of the 1930s—a development characterized by a substantial lowering of real wages, a sharp over-

the rate of exploitation and a decline of living conditions raises numerous social, ideological, and political problems. Briefly these problems are of two types (1) what were the social and political forces which inflicted such defeats on the Soviet workers? (2) how were these defeats inflicted? For the moment, we will concentrate our attention on this last question and will reserve the fourth volume of this work for an attempt to answer the first.

V The circumstances of the workers' defeat of the 1930s

When one analyses the conditions that led to the serious defeat of the workers in the 1930s one has to acknowledge that the root of these defeats lay in the extreme d vision of the workers and their economic and social atomization. This has already been mentioned, but now it behooves us to see what made possible these phenomena possible and the way in which they manifested themselves and developed.

(a) *The expropriation of the workers' organization*

At the end of the 1920s the starting point for the workers' defeats was the dismantling of the last organizations in which they had faith and which were still in existence namely the trade unions.

Whatever the limits put on union action during the NEP, the unions remained, nevertheless, organizations through which workers could put up a more or less organized resistance against the decline of their living and working conditions. This resistance was expressed through strikes, admittedly rare but nevertheless effective) and through negotiations in which the union representatives fought for certain worker demands which could be expressed, more or less, at union meetings and union congresses. The elimination of the old union cadres and leaders, from the end of the 1920s, and their replacement by cadres and leaders who were above all concerned with the

increase of production and productivity indicates that the workers suffered the expropriation of the last fruits of their own organization that the state tolerated. From that point the union became a state institution, entirely ceasing to be a class organization.

During the 1930s the authorities multiplied measures intended to prevent the reconstitution of true worker organizations: all attempts in this direction were brutally repressed by the police as "anti-Soviet."

There were many reasons for the authorities' hostility toward real unions. There were economic reasons: for anything which served to improve wages and living conditions would reduce the surplus value that might be accumulated. There were ideological reasons: because the Bolshevik Party portrayed itself as the "vanguard" of the working class, so any other organization of the workers, in its eyes, could only represent

"backward" elements subjected to the influence of "bourgeois classes." There were political reasons: because any union that was not a Party-controlled apparatus could only seem to bear "organized pole of opposition." Two observations must be made.

First, even during the NEP, "the idea that the unions could defend the workers against managers, which meant against the government's economic policy, had never had the Party's acceptance of the Party." As J. Saper remarks, this was connected with an "old anti-union tradition" of the Bolsheviks.

Second, the anti-union ideology of the 1930s was strengthened by what J. Saper justifiably terms "anti-worker mythology" which presented such an idealized image of the proletarian (which would be entirely devoted to the state's requirements for production, and regard the state as "its own") that the genuine working class found itself devalued. It was not "kulak" but "party bourgeois" or "peterson" and the Party therefore did not want to allow it to organize itself genuinely.

Thus the destruction of any real union organization was necessarily written into the Party's policy and also was facilitated by the objective circumstances of industrialization (a matter to which we shall return).

The major effect of this destruction was the disappearance of the working class as such: it having in effect been destroyed.

a last remaining form of organization and the ideological motives that were tied to them. In fact, what happened here at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s was a pre-annihilation of the October Revolution. The latter by establishing the power of the Bolshevik Party and identifying the latter with that of the working class, appropriated from the latter the means of its political struggle. In order to be in a position to take back its own means, the working class would have had to build new organizations and work out a strategy of struggle, even though what historical circumstances rendered impossible. On the contrary, happened at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s the process of destroying the union organizations was carried through to the end.

This destruction produced a bundle of negative effects for the authorities themselves. On the one hand, it produced a negative effect on the growth of social labor productivity for in the existing conditions this growth assumed a fairly limited working class capable of conducting organized struggles. In the absence of such a class accumulation took forms that were very particular and its productive effects had a specific character. This is a point to which part 4 of this volume will return. On the other hand, this same destruction of the class organizations made the workers indifferent to the union pseudo organizations that replaced them. This reduced the workers to developing forms of resistance against which the authorities could use only means of repression without effectiveness. From the production point of view, remained very limited, hence the attempts to limit as far as been shown to a serious, the losses.

Although the destruction of the union organizations was one of the preconditions for the worker control of the 1930s, it is also true that this destruction was made possible by certain objective circumstances such as the mass removal of the worker ranks and the various ways in which these were divided during this period.

(2) The mass 'removal' of worker ranks in the 1930s

There having been no detailed investigations, it is only possible to give very general indications about that process of removal.

of the ranks of the workers which developed during the 1930s. Some figures do permit an approximate measure of the size of this process. One may note firstly that the number of wage earners in main industry rose from 3.8 million in 1942 to 4.8 million (of whom 6 million were workers) at the beginning of the Third Five-Year Plan,¹⁰⁰ an increase of 4.2 million. On the other hand it is generally estimated that during this period about one million workers left the ranks of the working class to become cadres of production, administration and party (consequently with an adjustment for renewal due to death and retirement) (a renewal amply ensured by the children of workers). It is possible to estimate that the great majority of workers of the late 1930s consisted of workers lacking any experience either of a union organization more or less truly representing them or of collective struggles and this had significant ideological and political effects.

From the end 1930s the majority of industrial workers in China had a living tradition of collective struggle for the defense of their interests. These workers were strangers in their surroundings which imposed severe constraints which they tried to overcome by their own gumption and by changing their place of work. Ties of solidarity were only with difficulty established between workers who were barely acquainted with each other and they were vulnerable to the "cantrips" and artifice of enterprise managements and all the more so since the party had practically ceased to function except as transmitters of party policy and as defenders of decisions made by the enterprise cadres. Additionally many workers knew that they were regarded with distrust by the party and enterprise cadres, while among them petty bourgeois elements motivated by feelings that were egotistical, apolitical and indifferent. Enterprise cadres often treated them even as class enemies by reason of their presumed kulak origin and of the sympathy they were said to have for the kulaks. The press of the 1930s often described workers as idlers and shirkers.

Thus the various structures that the workers had been accustomed to view as more or less as their own (trade unions, Soviets and the party) despite contradictions which for some years had placed them in opposition to the workers completely ceased to function as such. These structures showed themselves

to be indifferent and even hostile to their interests and to any attempt by the workers to organize themselves. The cadres were not concerned about the problems posed by the workers' working and living conditions. They cared only about output growth and productivity. They lived better than ordinary workers. They belonged to a different world. Workers used them collectively - them, that is, their strike.

Being thus deprived of the means of collective resistance to the aggravation of exploitation and arbitrary decisions and the reconstruction of these means of collective resistance coming up against numerous obstacles, including police repression and the weak social fabric, the workers had recourse essentially to passive forms of resistance: absenteeism, frequent changes of enterprise (despite all the regulations), sabotage to the growth of productivity, bad workmanship, poor upkeep of equipment, etc.

These forms of resistance at the time seemed the only ones feasible. They did nothing to unify the workers, on the contrary, they divided them. However, they were widely practised, the majority of the workers being indifferent or hostile to talk about productive enthusiasm and to promises of a better life obtainable by conforming with the orders of the cadres.

Apart from the majority of workers who resisted the appeals made for production, there was a minority that did respond to such appeals. This minority at once included the older workers, those valued by whom the party and trade unions treated with more respect and who benefited from wages higher than those of the great mass of workers. It included also a small part of the younger workers. These comparatively few workers began to be able to improve their living conditions by supporting the industrialization policy, participating in the quest for greater productivity and improving their professional skills. The existence of these active elements helps the development of Soviet industry.

During the First Five-Year Plans, two movements with very different characteristics mobilized at the production level: these more active worker strata, socialist competition and the Stakhanovite movements.

(c) Socialist competition

At the time the First Five-Year Plan was launched the party leadership laid emphasis on what it called the 'Bolshevik offensive' in the fields of production and construction. According to the slogans of this period as they were developed, in particular by Stalin, the key to the success of this 'offensive' lay in the organization by the party of an 'extensive socialist competition and mass enthusiasm for work'.¹⁸ Stalin then evoked an appeal of the Sixteenth Party Conference on April 29, 1929 which had insisted on the large-scale development of 'socialist competition'.¹⁹ On this occasion, he declared that 'the most remarkable feature of competition is the radical revolution it entails in the concepts held by working people, because it transforms work into a matter of honor, a matter of glory, a matter of valor and heroism'.²⁰

The competition, combined with the reconstruction of the technical base should, according to the official spokesmen, permit an accelerated rhythm of industrial development described as 'Bolshevik'.²¹ and regarded as indispensable in a period in which it was claimed that 'rhythms decide everything'.

Already in May 1929, Stalin had insisted on the importance that he gave to competition (*sorevnovaniye* or *emulatsiia*) as a communist method to build socialism and he contrasted it with *konkurentsiya* (competition of the capitalist variety).

The principle of competition is *defeat and death for some and victory and domination for others*. The principle of socialist emulation is *concomitant assistance by the foremost to the laggards, so as to achieve an advance by all*.²²

These appeals by Stalin and other leaders led the Party and union leaders to initiate, from above, socialist competition which was based on promises by certain workers (called 'shock workers' or *udarniki*, to exceed the 'urgent norms' through a system of 'socialist challenges' which could pit some workers against others either by factory 'brigade' or by individual. In reality far from resting on 'help and

comradship—as Stalin claimed—it developed contradictions among the workers. It permitted a raising of norms¹⁰ if competition took shape it was not because work had become a matter of "honor and glory" but because a strong pressure was put on workers, and above all because he who triumphed in this competition received big bonuses and consideration allocation of consumer goods. It was in no sense a matter of a new attitude towards work nor of solidarity but rather of egotism and acquisitiveness.¹¹ Behind the trumpeting it was the matter which really suited the authorities because it permitted output growth while at the same time dividing the workers even more.

Measures taken by the party played a decisive role in the development of "socialist competition." These measures led to agreements between *udarniki* and enterprise managers. By virtue of these agreements the *udarniki* undertook to provide a certain volume of production (above the current norms) to be practical not more than three minutes lateness per month) to subscribe a certain amount to the State Loan and give at least one day a month of extra work. On its part, the management gave a certain number of privileges to the *udarniki*: priority on the housing waiting-lists, allocation of foodstuffs in short supply (important during a period of shortages), grants for professional training, the possibility of taking courses during working hours, favorable treatment in matters of social security and priority access to holiday homes. In addition the *udarniki* might receive honors which themselves carried material advantages in their own right.

The *udarnik* movement, by the privileges it accorded some workers, made many workers hostile to shock workers. This hostility appeared from 1929.¹² It increased particularly when enterprise managers used the "production records" established by the *udarniki* to raise production norms.

The placing of the *udarniki* in their own structure cut off from the mass of workers, had another aspect: the recruitment from this stratum of basic production cadres and minor administrative cadres. This became a large scale phenomenon in the first half of the 1930s. It brought with it various consequences. On the one hand it "took out" the especially active workers from production and from the working class. (On the other hand

it attracted the pushers toward "socialist competition." In these circumstances the movement was fated to take a more and more bureaucratic direction. Very quickly the vocational schools cut their worker intake and recruited most of all among ordinary school leavers: the fact of being an *udarnik* therefore gave progressively less opportunity to enter administration or production at cadre level. "Socialist competition" consequently ceased to play the role that it had played at the beginning of the 1930s. However, it did not disappear completely. It remained as one of the means of the disposal of enterprise managements through the privileges granted to participants to pursue the increase of production and the revision of norms.

(d) *The Stakhanovite movement*

In 1935 the Stakhanovite movement rose into view. It might seem to be only a variant of socialist competition, but in reality it was something very different. Socialist competition or *udarnik* resulted above all in an intensification of labour. Stakhanovism tended to transform the production process, the place and role of different ingredients of production, and all this on a *collective* level of worker initiative. From this point of view Stakhanovism bore a revolutionary character, even though accompanied also by an intensification of labour and an accentuation of capitalist features of production.

Stakhanov was a coalminer who achieved his first output record on August 31, 1935 in the Tsentral'naya armadnaya. Before his method was introduced, coal hewing was done on a face 85 metres long and 10 meters wide. The face had 160 work positions to which in all were allocated 17-18 workers. The latter did both cutting and propping, in addition five labourers looked after the clearing away of the coal. Of the six hours spent below two-and-one-half to three were spent on coal-hewing and the rest on propping. The picks were employed therefore for only about half the time. Moreover, only two shifts actually cut coal, the third shift being used exclusively for repairs and for preparing the work of the following shift. In practice, the picks were used only for six hours out of eight, that is, at one third of capacity.

In the circumstances of this mine and with this organization of the work process, the 17-18 hewers-proppers obtained an output of 250 tons, or 14.7 tons per worker on average, or 1.1 tons when the laborers were taken into account.¹⁴

Stakhanov introduced the following modifications to the production process. First, a single worker was to carry out the entire hewing and accordingly utilize his pick completely. Other workers prepared the work and did all the other tasks (propping and coal-handling) during the hewing. Henceforth a face would require only five hewers (four permanent and one to replace another at certain times) and five laborers, that is 10 workers instead of 23. A team organized in this way could cut 300-370 tons of coal per shift (instead of 250). Individual output exceeded, on average, 32 tons per day instead of 11, an increase of about three times.

The type of transformation that Stakhanov introduced in his mine spread rapidly. In September and October mention was made of quite a few miners who fulfilled their norms by 500, 600 and 1000 percent: a miner named Moker Lashtoba even achieved 2274 percent of his norm.¹⁵ The movement spread to other industries: to the Gorko Automobile Works (where the smith Busygin became famous for his records), other engineering industries, the textile industry, etc.

- (1) The nature of the changes in the production process induced by Stakhanovism

The nature of these changes may perhaps be illuminated by an analysis of the most important of them carefully described in the Soviet press in 1935 and 1936. In this connection the most revealing are initiatives of Stakhanov himself, Busygin, and the textile worker Vinogradova.¹⁶

In summary, these changes had the following features: (1) they led to deepening of the capitalist division of labor. They "liberated" skilled workers from secondary tasks and transferred the latter to unskilled workers. Thus they encouraged a greater division of the labor collective between a small number of skilled workers and a relatively large number of unskilled. The polarization

which characterizes collective labor in capitalism was therefore articulated in the example of Stakhanov cited above: 17-18 skilled workers with five unskilled gave place to one skilled with five unskilled. In the case of the transformation of the production process by the woman worker Vinogradova who worked on Northrop weaving looms, there were nine skilled workers and four unskilled in a team before the transformation. After the transformation there was one skilled worker and twelve unskilled.¹⁰⁰ Since the unskilled were paid less, the average cost of labor was reduced and profitability enhanced. (2) It allowed, in general, an intensification of utilization of the work instruments already existing (thus, in the case of Stakhanov, the picks were heretofore completely utilized). There was therefore an economy in fixed capital and a possible increase in the rate of profit. (3) It entailed an increase of the intensity of labor, thanks to the elimination of "dead time." This can be seen in the case of Stakhanov as well as of Buiygin, who packaged the tasks in such a way that each worker repeated at a rapid rhythm the same movements.¹⁰¹ The intensification of labor can be clearly seen through a report describing the work of Buiygin's team:

The entire brigade is in the grip of a tremendous work fury. It is simply impossible to converse or going up to one of these people to distract him for a minute. No one smokes, no one talks. I have visited many camps, but nowhere have I seen such an ecstasy of work.¹⁰²

This intensification of work was also obtained by analyzing movements with the aim of eliminating any that were superfluous,¹⁰³ which permitted an acceleration of the work rhythm. An analogous result was obtained in numerous cases by a reorganization of the workplace.

As Marx has shown, this type of transformation of the production process facilitates a tightening of the working day leading to an absolute production of surplus value.¹⁰⁴

Generally speaking, the dominant aspect of the Stakhanov movement was the adaptation of labor that was alive to the demands of a full utilization of labor that was dead thus permitting an increased rate of profit.

Thus the transformations of the production process induced by the Stakhanovite movement were totally expressed in the capitalist form of this process. They corresponded to its final development. They did not open the way to a collective mastery of production but rather to its parceling, and to a deepening and increased intensification of labor. They originated from the same trends as did Taylorism but they transformed one of the workers into a shift or brigade leader.

However, an examination of the Stakhanovite movement suggests that, apart from these dominant characteristics (those which attracted the intense attention of the Party, unions, enterprise managers, press, etc.), it was also characterized by a certain development of technical innovations put forward by the Stakhanovites. But this was a secondary characteristic, the ideological and political conditions which would have allowed the development of an innovational movement from below and not been created, largely because of the prevailing principle that changes in matters of equipment could be undertaken only by engineers and cadres. In this field, workers could not take the initiative. But they could make proposals leading to a better utilization of existing equipment, to an intensification of labor and to economies in wages.

Despite their expression in the capitalist form of the production process, the transformations of this process induced by the Stakhanovite movement nonetheless had originally a unique character. This was connected with the fact that actually Stakhanovism developed from a worker initiative, an initiative by workers who were relatively skilled and who encouraged, and sometimes imposed, certain transformations of the production process.

(2) The circumstances in which the Stakhanovite movement appeared

The enormous equipment effort made between 1926 and 1935 provided the material conditions for the development of the Stakhanovite movement. During this period nearly all branches of production were given new work tools much improved on the older ones. However the utilization of these new instruments

was very defective: the production processes not having been transferred as much as these new means allowed. The machines were therefore substantially under utilized, and there was a large reserve of unused production capacity.²⁰¹ The reason why such a large gap appeared between physical production capacity and actual production were numerous (the most important was the inability of engineers and cadres to make serious changes in the production process. This was essentially political. It was connected with the passive resistance that the workers put up against the raising of output and the intensification of work. This resistance held back the full utilization of productive capacity. The Stakhanovite movement issuing from the initiative of a part of the workers would take advantage of this underutilized capacity.

The ideological conditions for the development of the movement consisted of the emergence of new contingents of skilled workers who had acquired enough knowledge and authority to suggest and even impose certain changes in the production process (insofar as least as these transformations belonged to the capitalist form of production relationship, and pursued the aims of industrialization). These ideological conditions comprised also the seeking and acceptance by the workers of the material privileges that their initiative was bringing. The Stakhanovites thus allowed themselves to be separated from other workers and this separation sometimes went as far as antagonism for the initiatives of the Stakhanovites and as upward revision of production norms (which meant lower wages for those who did not adapt themselves to the new norms) which were opposed by a large part of the work class.

This opposition led to numerous incidents between Stakhanovites and ordinary workers (incidents that were not infrequently the focus of press of the time. For example, the Stakhanovites had certain tasks set, and if they threatened to lay a claim on them they were beaten up by those who had done the task. The latter if found out could be sentenced to several years in a labour camp or prison.²⁰²

(Other ideological characteristics were necessary for the development of the Stakhanovite movement. It was necessary that those who pushed this movement adhered to the party line.)

wage differentiation proclaimed as "just and necessary" since 1931. The quest for personal advantage was certainly not the only 'ideological base' for the rise of Stakhanovism but it was an important part of it. In this connection, it is highly significant that the movement took off precisely when rationing was ended, that is, when the high incomes gained by Stakhanovites²⁰⁶ could actually be used to buy products that henceforth were 'freely' available. And the fact that the majority of those who participated in the Stakhanovite movement were not Party members suggests that political motives played only secondary role in this movement.

In sum, at its beginning, Stakhanovism corresponded to a workers' initiative coming from a narrow stratum of skilled workers, mainly those wishing to put their capacities to "gainful use". This movement was made possible by the ideological transformations that had occurred from 1931, especially by the decline of egalitarian ideas that had been widespread among the working class at the end of the 1920s.

(3. The seizure from above of the Stakhanovite movement)

From the end of the summer of 1935 the initiatives of Stakhanov and his imitators were utilized by the unions, Party and managers of the economy to promote a countrywide production campaign. The quantitative results that were obtained were above all what attracted attention, whilst the effects of Stakhanovism on the quality and regularity of production were ignored. Those who took the risk of warning against such efforts were violently attacked in the press and easily treated as 'class enemies'.²⁰⁸

In October 1935 the first inter-union conference of Stakhanovites was held. One Stakhanovite still tried to raise questions about the nature of the movement that had just been born. He was brusquely interrupted by Pyatakov, then deputy commissar for Heavy Industry, who declared:

Why take the trouble to find a definition of Stakhanovism? A Stakhanovite is someone who shatters all the norms.²⁰⁷

The tone was thus given: Stakhanovism was to be a war machine against existing norms. This 'utilization' of Stakhanovism was confirmed by the same Pyatakov in his closing speech to this conference, in which he claimed:

The essence of the Stakhanovite movement consists in that the Stakhanovite shatters with his own hands, in practice and not only in theory, all the so-called technical work norms. Norms based on technique—this was only a ghost intended to frighten us, a brake to hold us back.²⁰⁸

A few days before, the newspaper of the Heavy Industry Commissariat had gone so far as to say that the 'ghost' of production capacities and norms 'should be sent to the devil'.²⁰⁹ It was to these unilaterally 'voluntarist' claims that Stalin alluded in order to criticise them, at the first conference of Stakhanovites of the USSR. Thus in his speech of November 17, 1935 he declared:

There are some who say we no longer need technical norms. That is false, comrades. Even more, it is absurd. Without technical norms the planned economy is impossible. Technical norms are a great regulatory force, which in production organizes the great masses of workers around the advanced elements of the working class.²¹⁰

Following this speech, Stalin said that new technical norms should be adopted, and he specified that these new norms should be about halfway "between the present norms and those that have been established by the Stakhanovs and Ruzhiks."²¹¹ This latter formulation was then used to fix new norms not on the basis of a concrete analysis of the circumstances of production, but on the basis of estimates purely subjective, of the 'possibilities' and this despite the warnings, perhaps ambiguous, in the resolution adopted by the plenum of December 1935.²¹² For example, the annual plan of 1936 provided for an increase of 21 percent in the norms of heavy industry, 23 percent of light industry, and 30 percent

of construction. To match these forecasts the plan fixed the respective average wage increases of these industries at 12, 14 and 17 percent.²¹² At the beginning of 1936 these forecasts were turned "upside down." In fact, the industrial conferences at this time raised norms by 30-40 percent in the engineering industry, 34 percent in the chemical industry, 51 percent in electricity generation, and so on.²¹³

Such norm increases led the enterprise managers to strive for a considerable increase of work intensity. Also, they often led to disorganization of production, especially when actual conditions did not permit them to obtain regularly the level of productivity that had been forecast. Lastly, they imposed loss of wages on workers who could not fulfil the new norms, either because they were paid piece-rates or because they were demoted because they could not fulfil the norms of their category. In general, the demotion of a worker from one category to the next one below corresponded, in 1936, to a wage loss of 30 rubles per month in industry, (in Category 3 the basic wage was then 300 rubles).²¹⁴ Lacking detailed figures, it is impossible to know what proportion of workers was able to fulfil or overfulfil the new norms, thereby raising their incomes, and what proportion conversely suffered a wage reduction. In any case, it is certain that the introduction of new norms increased the real differentiation of wages and accentuated the division of the working class.²¹⁵

(4) The longer-term effects of the Stakhanovite movement and its transformations

The hold taken from above of what had once been essentially a worker initiative tended to transform the "Stakhanovite movement" into its opposite. More and more often, "Stakhanovite days" were organized by enterprise managers, wishing for recognition by the central leadership, who induced their workers, to "break records." These managers thereby received bonuses, honors, and promotion. Some of the workers who had participated in the "records" were also rewarded.

However, performances obtained in such circumstances could only be temporary as a rule. In reality, they often disorganized

production during a more or less brief period an intensive effort was achieved. Stocks of raw materials were used up and, above all, work intensity was pushed up to a level that could not last. Thus the 'records' were usually followed by a period of production decline which took output below the previous level. Consequently quite often, the average output of a period which covered the 'records' and the period which followed them was often below the average obtained before the coming of Stakhanovism.

Still more serious for the workers' Stakhanovism, thus transformed, became the pretext for frequent violations of the labor legislation (multiplication of extra hours imposed as such retention at their workplace of workers, especially young workers, for two consecutive shifts, etc.), and infringement of safety regulations. In the mines, for example, this latter gave rise to grave accidents which later would be punished by death sentences for the engineers regarded as responsible for them.¹⁷

So that the 'Stakhanovite movement' in spite of everything should continue, enterprise managers accorded privileges to a minority of workers, foremen and shift leaders. They promised also to satisfy wider worker demands, notably to provide better work tools, but often they did not keep these promises.¹⁸

The Stakhanovite movement in this way came into contradiction with one of its initial fundamentals, of obtaining a substantial long-term growth of production based on a more intensive utilization of existing equipment.

In fact 1936 (which had been declared as the 'Stakhanovite Year') was characterized by serious difficulties in the field of production, by fluctuations in the progress of the latter and by the non fulfillment of plans in the main branches of industry. For example, coal production (in which the Stakhanovite movement had been born, reached 126 million tons in 1936, whereas the plan had set a target of 135 million: thus the plan was fulfilled by only 93 percent (and not exceeded as had been forecast at the beginning of the year). Compared to 1935 the increase was 17.8 percent, a smaller increase than in 1935 (19.4 percent).¹⁹

Even during the course of 1936 the inability of the 'Stakhanovite movement' thus transformed to secure a fast and

ating increase of monthly production was condemned by the Party leadership and the press. The latter stated that large percentages of workers were not succeeding in fulfilling the new norms including those in the Donets basin where Stakhanov was working.¹⁹ On the other hand, internal documents of the Party at this period note the indifference of the majority of the older skilled workers to 'Stakhanovism' and even their hostility toward Stakhanovites' privileges. They also said that wage increases brought about the dislike of the workers of enterprises by enterprises or regions where they hoped to get better wages.²⁰ In general, at the end of September 1936, heavy industry had reached its annual plan target in gross output only to the extent of 59 percent.²¹

Usually, the chaotic revision of norms due to Stakhanovism was a source of discontent because it gave rise to stark wage inequalities that workers regarded as unjustified. This feeling of injustice was all the greater to the extent that these wage inequalities had grown in an arbitrary way thanks to the irregular ways in which the title of 'Stakhanovite' (with its attendant advantages) was awarded. Thus in 1936 the proportion

'Stakhanovites' varied considerably between different factories and workshops without the reasons for these variations being clearly apparent. G. Friedmann, who visited a certain number of enterprises in the summer of 1936 estimated the average proportion of 'Stakhanovites' in these enterprises at 15 percent but he said there were discrepancies so that there were to explain. For example in a metal working workshop the Kazanovsk ball bearing plant in Moscow there were 21.5 percent of workers overfulfilling their norms as against 10 percent but out of 542 workers there were only 11 'Stakhanovites' and 36 outsiders. In another workshop where there was the same percentage of high outputs there were 28 'Stakhanovites' and 211 outsiders. G. Friedmann also remarks that the higher wage increases apparently benefited most of all the workers having the best equipment.²²

In fact from the beginning of 1936 the Party leadership was worried about different aspects of the situation it could see developing. At first it warned against the increased pressure put on workers by enterprise managers.²³ In March the *Pravda* editorial was entitled 'Against the

substance of the Stakhanovite movement.⁴²² Spring witnessed several articles of this type.⁴²³ Such articles were often interpreted by regional and local Party offices as giving the signal for a repression to be carried out against engineers and technicians on the lower levels. This interpretation was not encouraged by the central leadership of the Party, which at the time wanted sanctions against lower administrators and cadres to be limited to extreme distortions of the "Stakhanovite movement." For example, *Pravda* of June 2, 1936 condemned the "programs against managers" which, it said, typified the interventions of certain regional Party authorities (especially in the Donbas). Five days later the Party's official newspaper even stated that those who talked about a massive sabotage of the Stakhanovite movement by technical cadres in effect were helping the enemies of the movement.⁴²⁴ Soon afterward *Pravda* wrote about the need to watch over the material interests of the technical cadres and condemned those who opposed pay raises and favored egalitarianism.⁴²⁵ These positions were still being defended at the beginning of the summer, the distortions of the development of the Stakhanovite movement were then mainly attributed to "dizziness" brought on by the initial successes, and were still not attributed to sabotage. The regional and local Party offices were hidden to help the industrial cadres instead of accusing them.⁴²⁶

The moderation which the Party leadership came for in the treatment of industrial cadres tended to be abandoned during the summer of 1936. The reasons for this abandonment were various and numerous, with each reinforcing the others. At the economic level, the inadequacy of the results obtained compared with the ambitions at the beginning of the year played a decisive role. At the social level, the excellent growth of discontent on the part of workers confronted with revised norms, increased wage inequalities, intensified work and the multiplication of accidents, led to the punishment of industrial cadres who were blamed for this discontent. Contradictions between the chiefs of the central departments and enterprise managers also tended to be exacerbated. The latter more and more sought to escape the obligations placed on them by the former and they often deceived the central organs by presenting a deceptively embellished picture of the results obtained or

the factories that they managed. Finally the period extending to the second half of 1936 was characterized by a serious aggravation of tensions. The persecutions brought against the leaders of the left opposition included 7,000 arrests and 4,000 deaths, and their death sentences were one of the trademarks of this increased tension.

The multiplication and the emerging of contradictions culminated the start of the general crisis and political regression of 1936-37 and accelerated the final phase of the Stalinist movement. The latter in any case could not survive being based on slave labour, because it was impossible to maintain for long the ingredient of worker initiative which Stalinists could tolerate while subordinating it to demands imposed from above.

From August 1936 the crisis of the Stalinist movement took the form of an explosion of worker discontent over which the Party tried to gain control. There was then an explosion of dangers of the most unpopular on the scene. This in particular had its objective foundation in the abuse perpetrated by these managers (involving working conditions, wages and norms, but also the material advantages that managers had obtained for themselves or which had benefited their relatives, of family friends and personal clique).

The example of the case of worker discontent is given by what happened after the arrest of a depot manager of the Timber Trust, Western Region (in Sverdlovsk Region). He was arrested at first as a former Trotskyist. However, very rapidly his past adherence to the opposition movement disappeared; ceased to be the centre of the affair. He was accused of having held back the Stalinist movement by striking against the conditions and deterioration of having received arrears of wages, workers wages, disorganized transport of timber, lack of timber without justification etc. Some days after the publication of these accusations in the regional press, the workers and officials organized a general meeting of the workers and employees of the depot. This meeting adopted a resolution denouncing the appearance in court of the depot manager and his accomplices and his condemnation to death by shooting. This resolution was printed in the press. The official report of the meeting testified to the hatred of the workers towards the exploiters and administrative cadres of the depot and trust. The workers

were exasperated by arbitrary wage reductions and poor work organization (which they regarded as deliberate, and in ended to reduce their pay packet). They were equally discontented with poor safety at work, the living standards of their families and so on. All this was planned on the lower cadres and, in these circumstances, was utilized by the lower officials against the technical and industrial cadres with whom they were in conflict.¹¹

Cases of this kind multiplied up to the full. They testify to the ease with which certain leaders of local Party organizations could mobilize worker discontent against other workers belonging to the economic departments. They also show that there were numerous escape routes upwards to higher bodies and transfer of the accused cadres to other posts. On the whole, the central press took little part in these campaigns. No doubt it then seemed dangerous to cause the worker discontent in that way. In October 1938 there was an improvement of the criticism campaign based on first expression of discontent.

In fact, the crisis of the Stakhanovite movement, which began in 1938 made evident the instability of the existing economic and political system which utilized the industrial productive potential, a potential whose size had been demonstrated by the early Stakhanovite movement. The aspect of the 1938 Stakhanovite movement was a hard struggle to overcome this instability, whose cause was not identified and whose effects were limited or acts of sabotage.

Many saw so far as possible that was concerned the Stakhanovite movement, after its first creation in 1935 and 1937, was less and less capable of responding to the hopes that the Party leadership had placed in it in 1935. For example, the industrial plan for 1938, which was approved in 1937, may to the extent of 25 per cent, a five-year plan was even lower for each 25 per cent, per cent, per cent, and short total (65 per cent), while the rate of growth for industrial production was falling (11.1 per cent in 1937 and 12 per cent in 1938) against 28.7 per cent in 1935.

(a) *The reproduction on a larger scale of differences between unskilled and skilled workers*

In Part One of Volume Two of *Capital*, Marx describes a chapter to mechanization and large-scale industry.¹² He observes that

in the capitalist use of the machine, it is the whole system of machines what he terms the 'automation', which is the subject while the workers are simply auxiliary conservative organs helping its unconscious organs and like them subordinated to the central motive power. To this relationship of workers with the machine, which signifies the subordination of live labor to dead labor, Marx opposes that in which the collective worker or the body of social labor appears as the dominant subject and the mechanical automation as its object.¹¹

Marx remarks that the capitalist use of the machine transforms the forms of division of labor among the workers. It brings about a new relationship between the main worker and his assistants. It divides workers into those who work with mechanical tools and the laborers. It engenders more qualified personnel: engineers, mechanics, fitters, etc., who supervise the general mechanism and make the necessary repairs.¹²

Marx also observes that the bourgeoisie creates for its children *polytechnic schools* while it reserves for the proletariat only the shadow of vocational training. But he thinks that with the conquest of power by the working class there will be introduced the teaching of technology, practical and theoretical, in the people's schools,¹³ a teaching needed to break up the accumulation of knowledge technical and scientific at one pole of society which serves the interests of capitalist owners, the direct producers to servitude.

The character of the capitalist revolution of October did not prevent in its aftermath, attempts being made to struggle against the capitalist characteristics of the educational system. The Bolshevik Party, in fact, wanted to be the instrument of proletarian revolution and was therefore to create 'a unique school of work' and the workers' factories, *Rabfaks*.¹⁴ Similarly it decided on the creation of factory schools which

however the continuation of the machine conditions the organization of industry, resistance to the technology handed down by the old regime, illiteracy, etc., and the opposition to capitalist development of productive forces (which the Bolshevik Party did not get to grips with soon after and in response to the scope of the decisions taken in the morning of October for example the *Rabfaks* which were systematically to contribute to politics, education and teach a variety of industrial

Each aspect, tended little by little toward the training of specialists, who constituted a sort of "worker elite," and engineers of proletarian origin.

Throughout the 1920s two tendencies were still in confrontation. One of them emphasized mass polytechnic training and a single-stream approach (this tendency was often to be found within the Komsomol), the other insisted on rapid specialization and the setting up of distinct training streams.²³ This second tendency was supported by enterprise managers and certain trade-unionists.

At the end of NEP when the capitalist revolution was deepening, the second tendency was more and more strengthened. Priority was given to the training of narrowly specialized workers. The conceptions of the Central Institute of Labor thus prevailed both in the organs of accelerated professional training connected with this Institute and in the trade schools, headquarters authorized to provide a rapid "training" of a limited six-month term. This training was distinct from that given in the course of the "normal," previous two or three year cycle. Training on the job then became very important.²⁴

Partisans of this orientation invoked, in justification, its cheaper "cost" and greater "profitability," and they were believed. Thus there was consecrated a division between two training streams. One "produced" workers who were narrowly specialized and subject to the short term demands of production. The other trained a "worker elite" destined to enjoy much higher wages than those of the mass of the workers. This streaming contributed to the development of a "qualification" polarization.

The "short stream" insisted on "drills" necessary for very specialized activity: it was a matter of adapting future workers to work that was parceled into small blocks. Apprentices were shown how to do physical exercises.²⁵ Formally this stream also included scientific and technical instruction (leading to a so called "technical minimum" diploma) but the content of this instruction was increasingly specialized. Thus the decree of September 15, 1913²⁶ reduced to six months the duration of courses in the factory schools and theoretical instruction to 20 percent, in addition, the latter had to be directly relevant to the specialization. In these circumstances, only specialized workers

could be trained, not skilled workers and there could not arise the any question of a polytechnic training. The latter henceforth was criticised for producing 'intellectuals' rather than manual workers.²² Its contents reduced the technical minimum no longer prepared the way for entry into another training stream.

During the First Five Year Plan the trade schools of two or three years still trained a large number of skilled workers, many recruited from old workers and the sons of skilled workers.²³ Later skilled workers were increasingly trained in technical schools which drew their pupils from secondary and primary education. The same thing happened with the engineers' schools and the institutes of higher education.²⁴ By 1932 the distinction between the preparation of a single stream was abandoned. The separation between the training and situation of skilled workers on the one hand and the mass of workers on the other became ever greater.

At the end of the 1930s the division of the working class was accelerated. The bulk of the industrial working personnel consisted of labourers and specialized workers who had received a really minimal training. A minority consisted of skilled workers whose living conditions differed greatly from those of the mass of workers. Movement from one category to the other was increasingly difficult despite the existence of a network of relatively large evening schools. In effect the recruitment of skilled workers was mainly from the secondary schools. As well the living and working conditions of the mass of workers deteriorated in proportion to sustained and successful participation in the evening schools. Consequently, the polarization of the working class was consolidated.

II Forms of worker consciousness

Obviously an analysis of the forms of workers' consciousness would be very important for grasping certain of the ideological elements of the offensives and defeats suffered by the workers of the destruction of a I organizations they could call their own. However, a true analysis of these forms of consciousness is for many reasons extremely difficult, perhaps even impossible.

In fact, the possibility left to the workers to express themselves and even to act outside the control of the authorities was reduced to a minimum by a brutal repression based on the near-omnipresence of the police.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, the very conditions under which workers lived, the diversity of their origins, the conflicting relationships they had with official ideology (which did not succeed in functioning as a true dominant ideology),¹⁴⁸ contributed to a real explosion of the forms of consciousness while hindering a clear understanding of them. Consequently what is said about the forms of worker consciousness can only be fragmentary.

(1) Worker Party-members

Firstly, here are some figures for the evolution of the worker Party-members. These figures show that two clear periods must be distinguished from each other: firstly 1928-32, then the period from 1932 to the war.

During the first period the number of workers who were Party members grew strongly, from 572,000 in 1928 to more than 1.5 million in 1932 (end of December).¹⁴⁹ This growth was faster than that of the total workers. It corresponded to a systematic policy of the Party leadership that sought to increase the proportion of cadres of worker origin, regarding the latter as more "reliable." The scope of this increase of the worker Party-members can only be appreciated if account is taken of both the policy that the Party was putting it to operation (and it is known that this manifested itself by anti-worker offensives that deeply lowered the working and living conditions of the workers; and of the motivations and attitudes of the workers who then belonged to the Party).

The greater part of the information that is available about the worker recruits of the Party at the beginning of the 1930s (and this information comes as much from the Soviet press, which took up the complaints and requests of simple workers, as from the descriptions originating from workers and a few foreigners who worked in the USSR at this period), suggests that the recent worker members of the Party were increasingly included, as soon as they had received a promotion, to conside-

themselves above ordinary workers and to assert themselves as an 'elite' with a right to a certain number of privileges.¹²⁰ The rift between ordinary workers and Party members of workers origin because of this tended to deepen. This tendency was all the stronger in that the scale of the industrialization program and collectivization and the development of the tasks of management, administration and organization that this program implied impelled the Party leadership to transform rapidly a large proportion of its new worker recruits into officials and administrators.

The behaviour of new Party members of working class origin promoted to responsible posts (but also that of older Party members) was a source of real tension between the population and numerous cadres. These tensions impelled the Party leadership to launch the purges of 1933 and 1934. These purges were accompanied by press campaigns from which it seems that most of those expelled in these years were accused of being 'careerists', 'bureaucratic elements seeking personal advantage', 'morally corrupt', 'passive' and so on.¹²¹ Without taking all these charges at face value, one can still acknowledge that they roughly reflect reality.¹²²

Among the direct testimony that is available about the new adherents and sympathizers of the Party at the beginning of the 1930s is that of Litke. The general tone of his writing (and his cross-checks that are possible) make it hard to doubt the authenticity of this account.

In his book, published for the first time in 1948 and republished twice since,¹²³ this old member of the Yagoray Politburo tells of his experience with the young militants of Leningrad whom, up to May 1930, he was charged with instructing. This instruction was given to three categories of young militants usually originating from the ranks of the workers.

A first category was that of students of the Communist University. Litke writes that at first they seemed to form in some way the Leningrad proletarian elite. They were 25-30 years old and he describes them as 'brawny and energetic', adding: 'They were nearly all working men and had long careers of public activity behind them.'¹²⁴ He emphasized their capacity to learn but notes at the same time what might be termed an attitude of passive scholars in: 'they certainly

learned very well all they were taught they learned it by heart, for them what was not written in the manual did not exist. They were limited to the official program and showed no "critical sense."

When Caliga spoke to them about the role of the "free activity of the masses" they remained indifferent in their eyes. It was the part of leaders to make decisions. On the material level they enjoyed real privileges in a period of rigorous shortages during which worker families were short of bread, meat and butter, had their privileges and the sufferings of the workers did not seem to embarrass them. When one spoke to them about it they replied with generalities like "the building up of socialism is not without its difficulties." Thus in the end knowing them better, Caliga no longer regards them as a workers' elite but as persons anxious above all to defend their privileges.³⁵

About the second category of these students those of the regional Party school Caliga does not say very much. He indicates that they were young communists from the provinces usually of peasant origin. They acknowledged the contradictions in what they found themselves, adhering to the official line of the Party but sharing the peasants' uneasiness. Of these contradictory aspects it was the first which triumphed for these militants and were ready to be nothing more than low level executives of a line determined by others.³⁶

The last group of Caliga's students comprised factory communist militants, members of the agitation and propaganda departments of enterprise cells in Leningrad or secretaries of those cells. Nearly all were or had been workers. A few already occupied minor official positions. Others were still working with their manual, although unpaid, offices and were candidates for official positions. This was one of those categories by which the politically active left the ranks of the workers to enter official careers.

Caliga indicates that the living conditions which heated these pupils (who followed courses of three to six months) were excellent and privileged compared to workers who remained in the factories. All the same, unlike the pupils of the other categories, they remained close to the preoccupations of the worker masses. They would speak about them while standing

the common place explanations. They did not hesitate to declare "the worker's life is unbearable, his patience is at an end, our propaganda meets with great obstacles among the workers." Like the other students, these also showed a great interest in the revolutionary worker movements of other countries in which they still placed a good deal of hope.²³

Through these several observations can be seen the outline of several new types of new cadres and Party members. Some already gripped by anxieties about their own careers, others anxious about the situation of the workers but relatively passive, and the last category closer to the working masses, whose disappointments and hopes they expressed while partly turning toward the international revolutionary movement.

The scale of the 1933-34 purges²⁴ suggests that the mass entry of these types of cadre originating in the factories did not help Party activity among the workers of factories and construction sites.

For the period which begins after 1912 there is less information about the Party's worker recruitment. Nevertheless, it is known that in 1939-40 it provided less than 20 percent of new members.²⁵ In 1939 it would seem that workers formed on only about 30 percent of the membership. They numbered about 700,000, a decrease of more than 50 percent since 1912. Even more important was that a percentage of Party worker members represented no more than the equivalent of 3.5 percent of the total factory and construction site workers against 19 percent in 1928 and 14.5 percent in 1932.²⁶

These figures demonstrate the depth of the rift separating the Party from the working masses. They confirm that the Party's official ideology, exculpatory and triumphalist, was foreign to the forms of consciousness of the working masses.

(2) The non-Party workers

While it is difficult to comprehend the forms of consciousness, motivations and aspirations of worker Party members, it is even more difficult to investigate the same topics in relation to the non-Party members. In fact the open expression of the latter's feelings were strongly repressed, while on the other hand these feelings were extremely mixed and contradictory.

The bits of knowledge that we have suggest that there co-existed within these masses deep discontent (to which we shall allude later) and a kind of mass adhesion to the existing order. Most often, this discontent was not aimed at the regime but at what were regarded as the 'abuses and shortcomings of its operations, abuses and shortcomings which were regarded as remediable.

Among the pieces of knowledge available a special place may be granted to an investigation carried out between September 1950 and September 1951 among several thousand Soviet refugees in West Germany and the United States.⁴¹ (The conclusions of this do not seem to conform to what those who financed this project would have wished to reveal. In fact one of the conclusions the authors of this enquiry arrived at was that the majority of workers accepted the existing social and economic situation. The authors observe that the workers who were interviewed did not usually question what is termed "the institutional aspects of the Soviet system, such as government ownership of industry."⁴² They also note

The Soviet worker appears to take the Soviet factory and its special form of organization for granted and as the natural way of doing things. He is unhappy about the low pay, he wants the harsh labor laws eased or eliminated, he would like the pace eased and would be happy to have better materials to work with but he questions hardly a single major aspect of the general organization of the Soviet factory system.⁴³

However, this "acceptance" of the existing order was combined with discontent whose causes went far beyond those recalled in the above quotation. There were many reasons for discontent.

In the first place, it is known that at the end of the 1930s about two thirds of the Soviet workers were 'new proletarians' snatched from the village by the brutal methods of collectivization and he claimed 'dekulakization'. The great majority of these workers were placed in a miserable situation in consequence of Party policy and their situation was

painful than the one they had known previously, especially from the point of view of accommodation, food, and dependence on a hierarchy. This was extremely important. Even if it was lived through by some as though it were some kind of natural catastrophe, it nevertheless provoked a discontent much deeper than that caused by one or another particular "abuse."

At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s the deracination of large masses apparently gave rise to a rebirth of religious practices. This rebirth was felt by the Party as a manifestation of opposition and was repressed as such. This happened above all in the smaller towns at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan. For example, in May 1929 an OGPU report noted that whilst the workers of a locality near Smolensk were largely absent from May 1 holiday celebrations, they openly participated in large numbers at the religious ceremonies accompanying Easter. This report quotes the words of a young worker who declared:

The Bolsheviks spite the workers, so the workers spite the Bolsheviks. Take their May Day holiday. The little children came out to hear the music, but all the workers stayed at home. But on their own Easter holiday they all went to church. The Bolsheviks do evil to the workers, so the workers do them evil.²⁴⁴

In the following years this sort of oppositional manifestation seems to have been less frequent. Religious practices then no longer appeared as a challenge. Rather they were a sign of allegiance to an ideology other than that of the Party, an ideology in which part of the workers sought to "forget" the difficulties of daily life. It is not possible to evaluate the degree of influence of religious ideas within the working class. In any case it seemed sufficiently worrying to the authorities to persuade the latter to launch several anti-religious campaigns, notably in 1936.²⁴⁵ Conversely, at the time of the war the influence of religion (which actually was stronger among peasants than workers) seemed so strong that the Party ceased to attack it and contrived non-hostile relations with part of the clergy.

Thus the circumstances in which the large working class were turned weighed heavily on their forms of collective action, all the more durably because the "new proletarians" were most often the ones who had the most difficult life. Since they received the lowest wages because, having no special qualifications, they provided the great majority of laborers. They were the most poorly housed most often in barracks and in general they were immersed in work surroundings where power and coercion held sway, and which had nothing in common with the surroundings they had known previously.

In fact the difference of origin (town or country) and the differences of remuneration converged and mutually reinforced each other, marking out various cleavages within the working masses. The enquiry by R.A. Bauer and his associates already quoted confirms the depth of one of these cleavages. The authors of this investigation write, for example:

It is important to recognise that the Soviet policy of marked differentials in pay and other rewards according to skill and productivity has apparently succeeded in introducing marked distinctions within the working class. The segment of the working class which separates itself under the self-designation "skilled worker" is much more satisfied with its job experience in general, and with its pay in particular, than is the rank-and-file worker group.²⁰

These same authors specify that from certain points of view the skilled workers were closer to the non-manual workers than they were to the other workers (laborers and peasants) although they identified themselves as belonging to the working class. They also note that their relationships with other workers seemed to be tarnished by antagonisms, especially when they served as an instrument for the revision of norms.²¹

However, what was most characteristic of the forms of consciousness of the working masses was the way in which the laborers and near-unskilled workers (who represented the great majority of the mining and construction industry) achieved their implantation in production. The available information

expressed their numerous indications the existence of a critical and sometimes hostile attitude not toward the system as such as has been seen was "accepted as an abstraction" but as a concrete operation. These indications were to be found as much at the level of individual or collective attitudes as at the level of verbal expression.

What aspects of behavior which revealed a critical attitude toward the operation of the system have already been mentioned. To recapitulate they were: resistance to norms imposed, indifference to output quotas, absenteeism, etc. It has been seen how the authorities reacted to these attitudes, and how they strove to divide the workers by developing a complex system of bonuses and penalties, incentives.

It should be added that the authorities used another means to bring the workers to endure the miserable existence that was their lot. This means was alcoholism. It is a fact that millions of Soviet workers devoted their surplus in drink. It is a fact that whole women's labor products were unsalable, the state shops were never short of alcohol. The effects of this alcoholism were disastrous from the point of view of health and also of production, but nothing was done (and this is an understatement) to control it because it constituted a political insurance against alienating the workers, to increase their social and political passivity. It was the poison of the Soviet people.

That the increase of alcohol consumption was not enough to prevent various expressions of radical and deep discontent. These expressions took on a relatively rare because of the severity of repression and police vigilance manifested themselves as voluntary and collective work stoppages and street demonstrations. Because of the tight censorship little is known about these worker stoppages, but it is known that they broke out from time to time in plants that may be called "unfortunate" by reason of the absence of stable workers organizations. These struggles unfolded mainly in the industries in which wages were lowest (the textile industry) or in towns that were especially badly supplied with food. During the First Five Year Plan it is known for example that there were strikes, demonstrations and hunger marches in various textile factories in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Vykhino and elsewhere and that these worker struggles gave rise to severe repression.¹⁰⁰

The unfolding of the repression and the way in which the workers reacted are very significant. In general, the authorities began by satisfying the essential demands (to defend themselves, meet and ensure a return to work). Then they arrested some three workers and sent ten or twenty to camps. Later, in the following months, arrests of workers continued under various pretexts (usually for 'individual crimes'). In 1935, some thousands of workers were deported in the end. The book provides information about these struggles and the repression that they provoked, also notes about the participants' political struggles that in no way led them to put themselves up as champions of a political cause, less still as adversaries of the regime. They took part for concrete and specific reasons and once sentenced they wished above all to re-enter society, which was hard work and earn their release. These workers are not therefore opposed to the opponents of the regime.

The complexity of the forms of consciousness of the workers also appeared, as noted above, at the level of verbal expression, but the latter could not be known until later and in the particular circumstances which occurred especially around half of the 1930s. Then the Party leadership decided to make room for the expression of workers' demands while taking care to see that it was limited, controlled, and level because in industry and more especially in the 1930s. Following decisions taken after 1935, 'numerous petitions flooded the newspapers and certain official departments, notably those of the judiciary, from 1936 to 1938'.

A perusal of newspapers of the time and of the way in which access is possible in practice to this movement in the Simonovsk Archives, now in the United States, and in a certain view to be taken of the picture mosaic of the struggles of the different worker strata, the judgements that they made of it and the changes they wished to make in it. Nevertheless, information obtained in this way is necessarily limited. Firstly, it was only a minority which complained to itself and itself to the authorities. Secondly, those who complained apparently censured the expressions of their resistance because the previous experience had shown that excessive political complaints could rebound on to the heads of their authors with the authorities declaring: 'These complaints are from the

events. In these circumstances, what was condemned in letters from the population corresponded almost, but not exclusively, to what was condemnable by official standards. As to these simulations, an even nature of the complaints coming from the public is also very interesting.

If we take to begin with the letters of complaints in the *Sovetskii Arizves*, it would appear that the authors of the letters emphasized above all the abuses which were being perpetrated in the economic and social system as it was and that these abuses to them seemed to come entirely and only from the objective circumstances of the system's operation — from the actual relationships and practices that were objectively dominant, but from subjective personal characteristics of one or another agent of the system. Thus the workers who wrote these letters accused their officials of unfavorable situation of the country connected with them and to the often indifference they expressed of definite individuals who were exercising managerial functions and who were criticized for administrative arbitrariness, brutality, behaving like potentates of great lands, corruption, etc.¹⁷ As Khrushchev remarks, these letters were written in the "false style". Their authors were actually used the arguments used by the press and official spokesmen. They affected proclaimed principles in order to protest against their fellow-men. In the whole, they did not put into explicit question the economic and social system or the principles by which wages and norms were fixed. This type of letter did not usually contest the way the managers were condemned were appointed nor the institutions in which they were chosen. Their authors complained about concrete facts: wages that were too low, managers who were brutal or corrupt, etc.

The perusal of such complaints obviously does not tell us whether those expressing their opinion in these letters were actually concerned mainly those acts which official propaganda had designated as condemnable, and whether the authors of letters sent to the authorities actually believed they had the right to make about facts that were isolated (or partly so) — even though the same acts were widespread throughout the country. The almost total absence of complaints about the immediate situation while repression was developing in

a large scale — invites the thought that here there was an extreme prudence toward the authorities. Those who addressed themselves to them did so in despair in face of situations felt to be intolerable.

The style of these complaints therefore reflected more distrust than confidence toward the Party organizations, press, or ministry which were meant to take notice of them. This appeared when the authors of these complaints threatened to carry them — if a favorable outcome failed to appear — to a higher level, to appeal in Moscow or to Stalin.¹⁴ However, such a threat suggests that the authors of these complaints had perhaps a little faith in the higher levels. This faith — if it was genuine and it seems that part of it was — was nurtured by the repression that the higher leadership was exercising at this time against the local and intermediate cadres. The latter were often hated, and the repression that struck them was felt to conform to popular sentiment.

Fear of being punished for making a complaint impelled some writers of letters to refer to a much wider discontent which they said was felt by workers who did not dare to protest by letter. These writers *held the authorities themselves to blame*. For example, the authors of a letter denouncing the behavior (described as stupid) of certain managers declared:

We are willing — because all the ignorant and consciousnessless workers are slandering the authorities because of such idiots.¹⁵

This suggests the existence of a discontent much more radical than that personally expressed by the authors of the letters.

The discussion campaign mounted in 1936 around the project of the new Constitution (which was adopted at the end of the year) was also an opportunity for a certain number of workers to express their point of view and their criticisms. But information about the criticisms expressed in the framework of these discussions is relatively rare. However, it does suggest that at times the discussion was carried farther than the authorities wished. For example, while certain officials were blamed for having reduced the discussion to a mere 'formality' others were attacked for 'not having been able to lead the criticism

which meant that questions were raised where they were not raised, and even feasible to the authorities.¹⁵

The Smolensk Archives reveal some of the themes raised against the wishes of the authorities. Among these future changes to be made relative to labor on the example of workers wanted to see in the Constitution the obligation of enterprise managers to respect this legislation. Suggestions were also made with a view to a more strict regulation concerning discipline, work safety and the extension of free medical services. Workers demanded a better guarantee of their personal safety in a change in the way officials and especially judges were appointed. Some demanded that officials should be elected and some workers suggested that inspection parties should be legalized.¹⁶ All this indicates the existence of an ideology quite different from the official ideology.

The available information enables us to know of a very clear and clear ideological differentiations existing between workers and about the discussions which resulted from this. However, we know that discussions took place and that points of view that differed from the official point of view were necessarily getting themselves expressed. We also have that when these differing points of view obtained support, they were not mentioned in the press.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the active participants in the discussions were a minority. The majority of workers staying aloof participating in a formal sense when meetings were organized at which a discussion was practically unavoidable.

In sum, everything indicates that there were state of mind of worker consciousness. These feelings were very close with the optimistic and triumphalist discourse of the authorities. For the latter had scarcely any contact with the great difficulties in which the public was finding itself. These feelings of shattered worker consciousness favored the acceptance of the passive acceptance of the situation, but did not block the expression of much resentment or even the explicit protest, but local demonstrations of discontent. Two elements contributed at the time to prevent this discontent taking an organized explosive form.

The first perception especially in the second half of the 1930s was the ability of the authorities to themselves talk

about the situation and denounce the circumstances that especially exasperated the workers: hence the numerous interventions by Stalin, pillorying the "bureaucracy," the attitudes of "great lords" and of certain managers and the scandalous attitude towards people, cadres, and workers."¹

Such words obscured the role played by the authorities themselves in the consolidation of a system that multiplied the privileges and the arrogance of an exploiting managing minority. However, through the denunciation which it included, this discourse sounded in the ears of the workers like an echo of their own complaints. It contributed—above all when repression fell on part of the cadres—in developing a populist feeling with a certain faith in the power summit from which this discourse came. Thus there coexisted in the worker consciousness an absence of adhesion to the official ideology, a uniform discontent with the functioning of the system together with a "faith of the populist type in the top leadership of the Party."

The second element which prevented accumulated discontent taking an explosive form was the scale itself of the repression. The latter succeeded in dismantling any attempt at organized resistance. It gave rise to prudence, fear and the passive acceptance of things as they were. Above all since it generated a vast sector of penal work it made those who were not subjected to that kind of work feel that they were "privileged."

Notes

1. These figures are from *NKh* 1970g, p. 509. They have been revised upwards from those which were in the statistical collections published before the 1962 publication of the 1959 census results, which also revised the 1939 census results. See *Itogi vostochnoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 g. SSSR* (Moscow, 1962). I mention this revision because of its size and the conclusions that can be drawn as to the dimensions of penal labor (which at least in part may—or may not—be included in the statistics about wage-earners in the Soviet economy). To illustrate the magnitude of the statistical revision, I would mention that in the 1956 year book the same wage-earning population is estimated at 31.2 million (for *NKh* 1956g, p. 203) which corresponds to the figures obtained on the

[illegible]

they compared
the wage estimates from NLRB findings of fact
with the two other sources of data. In some part of the
wage surveys were not included in the survey of workers
surveyed in 1961. All workers included in the survey that part of
the wage survey is not included in the survey of some workers but is
has almost been excluded. I do not know that these other workers
included in the statistical survey of workers. It is not what
is known about the time series of the wage surveys. Whether
it appears in part to be in the two workers there will be the
raised later

(Evanson 1953), p. 110; and Lortimer, p. 100

5. Estimated from *N.A.A.*, 1870g., p. 509

1. The first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
2. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
3. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
4. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
5. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
6. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
7. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
8. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
9. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the
10. concept of the first sign of the action when reference was the adoption of the

It was this phenomenon was of such magnitude that on average each worker changed jobs three times every eight months from 1929 to 1934. Later, it was found that the highest statistical value took for 1934.

... very simple and systematically covered the needs of the time and ... for the people (quoted in this percent work and also V.P. B. a part ... *soyuznitsy* (Moscow, 1938), pp. 60 ff.

pp. 107 and 312-13

•O. Izyaslava, Jan 15 1933

Now, $\mathcal{A}(\mathcal{F})$ and \mathcal{F} satisfy the hypotheses of Lemma 1. Hence, we have

1. In view of the fact that the said employee is not a shareholder and has not been introduced as a partner, the said firm has been introduced as a partner on 11.11.1960. By a decision of Dec. 10, 1960, the said firm has been introduced as a partner on 11.11.1960.

3. Inventive, Dec. 29, 1938

14 These magazines were made worse after the war by a further reduction in the number of pages and the quality of the paper. The number of pages was reduced from 32 to 24 and the quality of the paper was reduced from 100 to 80 gsm.

[illegible]

- the six day working week or larger would find time for work. The decree of June 1941 returned to the seven day week and the time for the one day of rest, the latter being fixed. It was a question of increasing working hours without a corresponding wage increase and was connected with the 96-point reform enacted in May 1941. See *Izvestiya* Dec. 20 1941.
16. *Izvestiya* issue 2nd 1946 in A. Bergson, *The Structure of Soviet Wages* (Cambridge Mass. 1954) pp. 2-5ff. there are English translations of wage extracts from the decree of June 26 1940 and also from that of Dec. 20 1940 to be mentioned in the next section.
 17. This right was recognized by Article 40 of the 1941 Soviet Code. See *Sovetskaya zakonnaya kolektsiya RSFSR* Moscow 1941.
 18. See Schwartz, pp. 106-107.
 19. Articles dealing with iron clasp on may be found in *Sovetskaya zakonnaya kolektsiya* of Oct. and Dec. 1940.
 20. *Sovetskaya zakonnaya kolektsiya* No. 7 8 1940 p. 3 and *Izvestiya* August 11 1940.
 21. See A. Nave, *An Economic History*, pp. 280ff.
 22. Schwartz, p. 119-30.
 23. See especially *Izvestiya* Dec. 2nd 1941 and *Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta* March 5 1942 (Oct. 10 1942 and Sept. 23 1942).
 24. Schwartz, p. 118.
 25. For example, a decision of Narkomtrud of the USSR dated Jan. 15, 1931 or of Narkomtrud of the RSFSR dated Jan. 11 1931. *Izvestiya* Jan. 8 1931 and *Izvestiya Narkomtruda*, pp. 137-40.
 26. In any case at the time the management of an enterprise could discipline workers for many reasons as a punishment, because it was necessary to reduce the work of a particular factory (e.g. because of lack of materials) as a redundancy payment might be paid. See also A. Nave, *An Economic History*, Moscow 1950 pp. 99 and 103 quoted by R. Conquest, *Industrial Workers* Moscow pp. 18-19. A principle of agreement of the trade union and enterprise organizations was required in the 1940-1941 work agreement which was almost always granted.
 27. The business of the management was then mainly transferred to the trade unions. *Izvestiya* June 24 1941 (1941) and (1942).
 28. See above previous section and *Izvestiya* Oct. 20 1940.
 29. R. Conquest, *Industrial Workers*, p. 31.
 30. Later by the three decrees of 1941's decade after the war. They were formally abolished only in 1956. R. Conquest, *Industrial Workers*, p. 31.
 31. See *Izvestiya Narkomtruda* 1939 p. 76 and Schwartz p. 11.
 32. See *Izvestiya* Oct. 3 1940 and *Revue internationale de l'économie* Dec. 1940.
 33. The decree of Oct. 3 1940 stated that only those students and pupils who had an excellent notation would qualify for a study grant. There is a text in English of this decree in A. Bergson, *The Structure of Soviet Wages* pp. 234ff. In 1940 the grants varied from 150 to 300 rubles per year for a bachelors and from 300-500 for university. At that time the average monthly wage of a first category worker the lowest paid was

around 100 rubles. It should be mentioned that after the death of Lenin the only groups were students. In 1934 the 11 members of these groups were the children of cadres or members of the revolutionary party. See *The Soviet Management Process and Soviet Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.), 1966, p. 250, note 14.

14 A. Mary (a sister of the famous writer of 1917-20) (1917-20) p. 25.

15 *Pravda* plan number 1 (1929), Vol. 1 p. 185.

16 See *Management* (1934) and *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

17 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. See also *Pravda* (1934) p. 185.

18 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185.

19 Quoted from Schwarz, p. 185.

20 See *Management* (1934) and *Pravda* (1934) p. 185.

21 In the context of this chapter the study is the study of the study.

22 The book was published by the Soviet writers' Union in 1934.

23 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

24 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

25 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

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33 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

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39 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

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45 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

46 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

47 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

48 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

49 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

50 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

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52 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

53 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

54 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

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57 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

58 *Pravda* (1934) p. 185. It should be noted that the Soviet Union in 1934 was a country with a very high rate of unemployment in Europe (see *Pravda* 1934).

55. See *Sovetskii kholod i kholodnoizmeneniye iuzhnoyevy tekhnicheskoy partii* 2, p. 234-5 quoted by A. A. Arndt, *Managerial Power*, pp. 247-48.
56. Marx remarks that the direction of the production process becomes despotic when it has a capitalist nature. Marx, *Le Capital*, Editions Sociales edition, Vol. 2, p. 24. He also notes that the more intensive labor force grows, the more the function of direction is exclusively entrusted to an officer corps. *Capital*, p. 24. He adds that discipline that has been imposed would become superfluous in a social system where the workers worked for themselves. *Capital*, Vol. 2, p. 102.
57. *Spravochnik profsoyuznogo rabotnika* (Moscow, 1967). This source is in French. See T. Lowy, *La transformation du travail dans le socialisme soviétique*, in *Sovietisme du travail*, No. 2, 1971, pp. 1-10.
58. Para. 2 of the order of Feb. 25, 1932. *Spravochnik i profsoyuznogo*.
59. In these and following points see Schwartz, pp. 2-88.
60. Among others see AP, April 29, 1930, and Feb. 25, 1931, Sept. 1931, Nov. 7, 1931 and then throughout the 1930s (Schwartz, pp. 2-88).
61. *Izvestiya*, Nov. 7, 1931.
62. *Trud*, March 21 and 29, May 11, 1934.
63. *Trud*, May 16, 1937.
64. Schwartz, pp. 288ff.
65. Articles quoted by Schwartz, pp. 202-03.
66. See the official reports of the State (Note 10, Chapter 1, Part 1, volume).
67. We shall return to this question in Part 3.
68. See Schwartz, pp. 293-303. This author shows that the Work Order was made incapable of performing its duties.
69. K. Marx, *Le Capital* (Editions Sociales edition, Vol. 4, p. 307).
70. Contingents of detainees could also be allocated to these units. It was then a matter of the penal colony workers rather than of the labor camps. Schwartz, p. 99, and I. Chiff, *Russia's Marxist Analysis* (Leningrad).
71. See *Sovetskaya zashchita i razvuzhenniy mikhob-ekonomicheskoy* (SovSR No. 244, 1933).
72. *Sovetskoye zashchitnoye stroitel'stvo* (Moscow, 1936), p. 5. Schwartz, p. 100. It will be noted that the first figure denounces as false by the Soviet press was not exceptionally high at all when compared with other countries.
73. *Izvestiya*, Dec. 29, 1938.
74. *Izvestiya*, Jan. 9, 1939.
75. See *Sovetskaya zashchitnoye*, No. 3, 1939 and *Pravda*, Jan. 26, 1939.
76. Schwartz, p. 103.
77. *Trud*, Feb. 3-5, 10, 1939, quoted by Schwartz, p. 104.
78. *Izvestiya*, June 27, 1940.
79. *Sovetskaya zashchitnoye*, No. 3, 1940, pp. 24-10 and 10-11. Schwartz, p. 100.

- 81 See *Sovetskaya yustitsiya*, No. 13, 1940, pp. 8-10, quoted by Schwarz, p. 113.
- 82 *Conquest Industrial Workers*, pp. 105-07.
- 83 *Investive* Dec. 30, 1940, quoted by I. I. I. Kuznetsov, p. 27.
- 84 See Vol. 1, p. 183-185 of the present work.
- 85 See above, pp. 391-92 and V. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1945), Vol. 32, p. 24.
- 86 See above, Vol. 32, p. 98.
- 87 See above, Vol. 33, p. 187.
- 88 Vol. 2, pp. 172-73 of the present work. Also KPSS [1953], Vol. 2, pp. 94-95.
- 89 See Vol. 2, pp. 346 and 455 of the present work.
- 90 *Novaya i staraya VAP* [ibid.] p. 83. Another English version is given in T. Szamuely's "The Elimination of Opposition between the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU," in *Soviet Studies*, [January 1956], pp. 318-39 [Quotation on p. 336].
- 91 See KPSS [1953], Vol. 2, pp. 604ff.
- 92 See above, pp. 807 and 808.
- 93 See Vol. 1 of the present work, p. 389.
- 94 KPSS 1953, Vol. 2, p. 608.
- 95 See the article by I. Kossior, deputy chairman of VSNKh, in *Trud*, Jan. 13, 1931. This paper at this time replaced *Torgovo-promyshlennaya gazeta*.
- 96 *Trud*, Feb. 6, 1931, and Schwarz, pp. 248-49, also pp. 516-17 in Schwarz, French edition. S. Schwarz, *Les Ouvriers en Union soviétique* (Paris, 1956).
- 97 For example, see *Trud*, April 13 and 7, Sept. 1931.
- 98 *Trud*, April 9 and 12, 1931.
- 99 J. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 13 (Moscow, 1955), pp. 53ff, especially pp. 61-62. Stalin's speech of June 23, 1931, was called "New conditions—new tasks in economic construction."
- 100 *Trud*, August 15 and 16, 1931.
- 101 *Trud*, January 14, 1931.
- 102 *Trud*, February 16, 1932.
- 103 This trade union responsibility was emphasized by Gavril Yeninburg, secretary of the Central Council Presidium in charge of wage matters, in May 1932 at a meeting of the Presidium. See *Trud*, May 21, 1932.
- 104 See "Matenava pour le rapport soumis par le Conseil central du U.R.S.S. au Congrès unitaire," Moscow, 1932, pp. VIIff, quoted by Schwarz, p. 493 of the French edition of his book.
- 105 The Ninth Congress still included 84.4 percent of delegates regarded as workers. At the Tenth Congress the latter constituted only 23.5 percent, while 43 percent were union officials and 9.4 percent technicians [See: *Deutscher Soviet Trade Union*, [London, 1950], pp. 128-29].
- 106 As is known, the same situation still prevails today in the USSR, as in the Soviet bloc countries, and also in other "socialist" countries. The only exception is Poland, where the workers' struggles enabled the workers to again form a union organization that would not be simply an instrument used by the exploiting class and its power.

107. Trud. January 24, 1933.
108. Trud. April 8, 1933.
109. *Administrative measures for strengthening the economic management of the people's economy* (Moscow, 1933), 40/130, art. 1 and 1934/43/142. See also BSE 2nd Edition, Vol. 26, p. 161 and KPSS [1954] Vol. III, pp. 230ff.
110. Trud. September 1, 6 and 8, 1934 and Pravda, September 9, 1934. Also see Schwarz, pp. 442-45 and 457 (of the French edition).
111. Trud. September 24, 1934.
112. Pravda, December 11, 1935.
113. Trud. November 23, 1935.
114. On this point see Vol. 2 of the present work, p. 147 note 12. These archives comprise 530 dossiers of which 327 are numbered WKP 1 to WKP 527 (two are numbered R3 821 and 824, and the others are numbered separately).
115. See the archival documents under WKP 153, p. 154 an extract of which is quoted in M. Fainsood Smolensk, p. 236.
116. See WKP 305, p. 142 quoted by M. Fainsood Smolensk, p. 241.
117. See above, pp. 323-24.
118. Pravda, March 21, 1937.
119. Trud. March 28, 1937.
120. This Plenum was the sixth since the 1935 Congress; the Fifth had met two-and-a-half years previously. However, in 1934 it had been decided that the Plenum would meet every two months (Pravda, September 4, 1934).
121. These extracts from Shverdkin's speech may be found in Schwarz (French edition), pp. 522-23.
122. This statute was elaborated only in April 1949. It would be reflected in the Tenth Trade Union Congress. It consecrated the concept of tasks that had prevailed since 1930 giving priority to the task of motivating the workers for the fulfilment and overfulfilment of the plan for the increase of labour productivity and the reduction of production costs. The other tasks are only resubordinated to that end. See P. Baskin, *Conferences collectives*, pp. 34-35.
123. Pravda, May 28, 1937 and Trud. September 15 and October 4, 1937. Schwarz (French edition), pp. 464-65.
124. KPSS [1945], Vol. III, p. 368.
125. See Vol. 2 of the present work, pp. 246-50.
126. Stalin Works, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1953, pp. 769f.
127. See above, p. 63.
128. See above, p. 64.
129. See above, pp. 77-78.
130. See Note 74, Ch. 2, in Part 3 of this volume.
131. *11. Vozrozhdeniye i razvitiye proizvodstva narodnogo khozyaystva* (Moscow, 1933), pp. 308 and 404.
132. L. Mart, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1954 edition), p. 32.
133. Stalin, *Sobremennaya*, Vol. 1 [1935] (Standard 196), p. 30.
134. This differentiation was part of a policy of directing the working class to subjects to which we shall return, and of constituting a reserve in order to

that was not very privileged. The structure of this system gave to the power of the dominant class a particularly striking form. It permitted the practice of a "workerism" of specific type.

135. The same increase in 1911 and 1912 especially a constant was in fact E. Zolotarev's analysis in *Planirovaniye*, p. 142. The author writes that in 1911 construction cost increased by 12 percent whereas the plan anticipated a decrease of 15 percent (see his note 1, p. 185).
136. *Sov. Pravda*, May 21, 1931.
137. S. Kaplan, quoted from Schwarz, p. 182.
138. *Zh. November* 7, 1911, quoted from Schwarz, p. 182.
139. The growth of investment had in fact as a consequence the phenomenon that only a relatively small part of it was covered by the profits of other plants. Thus in 1913 the profit volume of the state sector rose to 7.8 million rubles (see also *Planirovaniye* pp. 142-43 and 144) (see note 10) whereas investment in the same period increased by 2.7 billion, see L. Bortoluzzi in *La Planification soviétique*, p. 144.
140. KPSS [1971], Vol. 5, p. 149.
141. See Vladimir A. Levan in *IKP* 1965, p. 26, quoted by C. R. Vatsopoulos in his article in *Journal of Postgraduate Studies*, 1965, 1966, 1967, University of Paris I, thesis, 1966, p. 1. Study of a national feature (see above).
142. We shall see later the development and significance of this mechanism.
143. *Mass. Soukhozov* in Vol. 1, *USSR Standard* 1967, p. 80.
144. See above, pp. 83-84.
145. See above, p. 84.
146. See above, p. 8. We shall see later more about the resistance of the workers to mechanization and how it was used to decrease work intensity.
147. This is developed later in this chapter.
148. See Vladimir A. Levan's *Materialnye Slobozheniya* (1913) (see above, 1965, p. 10) and A. Puzov, *An Economic History*, p. 211.
149. *Izvestiya*, April 2, 1936.
150. A. Yegorov, *Russko-Sovetskoye Front' na Vostok i Pribli*, London, 1942, also *Sovetskaya Trud*, April 17, 1941.
151. *Izvestiya*, April 11, 1919, quoted by I. A. H. Kuznetsov in *Material Analysis*, p. 24.
152. Progressive piece rates gave way to a more piece wage for an output within the norm. (see below) when each worker was required each unit of output was remunerated at a rate that was over 100 percent. For example, for a worker who overfulfilled his norm the extra corresponding to the 1 percent above norm output would be paid at 1.1 times the normal rate. Beyond 2 percent the rate was double, and beyond 10 percent it was 10 times. This example is quoted from V. A. Kuznetsov. The *Industrial Worker* 1967, a translation from a book of the same title in Russian, Moscow, 1962. There is the result that the progressive piece rate is equal to a piece rate when it permits a reduction of production costs (pp. 81 and 82).
153. Schwarz, p. 147.
154. Schwarz, p. 148.
155. N. Maslowa, *Der Arbeitslohn*, p. 27.

- ration in 1917 28 per cent making the hypothesis that the value of production have moved at approximately the same rate. This is no doubt an optimism but compensated error of estimation under estimation of the advance of prices is by no means small. Admitting that the real 1937 wage is 80 per cent of the 1917 wage on average of more than 1,000 rubles if he is right, it would have paid the worker over the actual wage of 120 42% more.
182. Index of the rate of surplus value if he is right of 1917-1937, replacing a comparison with 1928 (the last of this series is more satisfactory but it seems advisable to suggest a 1917 base).
183. See J. Sapiro, *Organisation*, p. 365.
184. See above, pp. 154-55.
185. See C. Bettelheim, *La Russie soviétique* p. 108. N. P. K. 1937.
186. From 1929 the Party worried about the new workers' state and were the subject of unfavorable CPS reports. See M. F. Kuznetsov, p. 369.
187. See the political report presented by Stalin to the 5th Congress of the CPSU (see 2. *Politika* in *Arkhiv* 1961, p. 111) and the 1937 report.
188. KPSS 1953] Vol. 2, pp. 486-87.
189. Stalin, *Works* Vol. 3, p. 134 (also in *Report*).
190. See above, p. 362.
191. An alternative English translation appears in *State* 1960, 115-16.
192. For his explanation see B. Mark in *Man and Society* 1960, 115-16. In the Soviet literature see V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 21-23.
193. See above pp. 44 and 44-45 and also Sapiro, *Organisation*, p. 4.
194. See issues of *Trud* from May 1929.
195. There is a description of this period from personal and official sources by Mathias in A. Paquot, *Le Mathiasisme* (organisation of the CPSU in 1927) especially pp. 6-10. This book is a description of Mathiasism up to 1927. Also see J. Sapiro, pp. 45-49 and C. T. Kuznetsov, *Le mouvement ouvrier* (the movement of workers) in *Arkhiv* (Moscow) Nov. 12-13, September 1962.
196. *Trud* November 1, 1929.
197. These changes are explained briefly in A. Paquot, *Le Mathiasisme*. The nature of these transformations is described in detail in the *Arkhiv* of the Party leadership (p. 44) and the book by Sapiro, *Organisation* (p. 44) and in the *Man and Society* 1960, 115-16. (and of others) and throughout in connection with the Mathiasism in *Man* (KPSS 1953), Vol. 2, pp. 486-87.
198. A. Paquot, *Le Stakhanovisme*, pp. 81-83.
199. See above pp. 44-45 for a description of the transformation of the CPSU in 1929.
200. *Trud* October 1, 1929 quoted by Schwartz, p. 104.
201. See B. Mark, *Le mouvement ouvrier* (the movement of workers) in *Arkhiv* (Moscow) Nov. 12-13, September 1962, p. 20.
202. See B. Mark, *Le mouvement ouvrier* (the movement of workers) in *Arkhiv* (Moscow) Nov. 12-13, September 1962, p. 20.

- 203 B. Medus, 'Le mouvement stakhanoviste' notes that in 1935 50 to 70 percent of equipment in service in Soviet industry dated from after the commencement of the First Five-Year Plan. Their low utilization made possible the production increases due to the Stakhanovite movement, loc. p. 204.
- 204 Trud, November 1, 1935 and Pravda, November 8, 1935. Also see the pamphlet 'De Taylor à Stakhanov' 'Culture de la Terre libre', 1937.
- 205 These bonuses would reach 1 000 to 2 000 rubles per month while current monthly wages were 90 to 100 rubles. As well as the Stakhanovites, especially those who received decorations gained from various material advantages of various orders of magnitude, tax relief, free rides on some transport services, priority in housing allocations and places in holiday homes, gifts in kind, cars, motor cycles and so on.
- 206 See for example, Izvestiya, October 2, 1935, quoted in 'De Taylor à Stakhanov'.
- 207 ZI, October 12, 1935.
- 208 ZI, October 14, 1935.
- 209 ZI, October 21, 1935.
- 210 Stalin, Works, Vol. 13, p. 95.
- 211 See above, p. 96.
- 212 KPSS [1953], especially pp. 813-14.
- 213 See A. Panquier, *Le Stakhanovisme*, p. 70.
- 214 *Sotrudnichestvo narodnykh khozyaistvo v 1933-1940gg* (Moscow 1963), p. 10* quoted by A. Nove, *An Economic History* p. 213.
- 215 A. Panquier, *Le Stakhanovisme*, pp. 50-54.
- 216 It will be noted that in 1936 the advance of the average annual wage was quite slow (+ 20 percent) taking into account the price rise of October 1936 and the substantial increases in Stakhanovite wages. In the investigation that C. Friedman made at the time in the USSR he noted that in a certain number of the workshops he visited the actual wages had fallen between period October 1935 to March 1936 and the period March-September 1936 (either because of new norms or because of bad production organization). See F. Friedman, *De la Sainte Russie* p. 114.
- 217 The Soviet press of 1936 provides numerous examples of these practices— which amount to a radical transformation of the Stakhanovite movement and of their consequences. Also see Schwartz, pp. 93-96.
- 218 For example, see Trud, September 9, 1936.
- 219 C. Belashov, *La Planification soviétique*, p. 200 (total figures expressed in 1946 17 "prices" do not show the same difficulties, see above, p. 11).
- 220 But in a large extent this is because of the way in which statistics presented in "prices" were made up.
- 221 Belashov, No. 21, 1936, p. 67 and Pravda, April 15, 1936, June 2, 1936, and October 21, 1936. See also C. Rittersperg, 'Le mouvement Stakhanoviste,' pp. 263FF.
- 222 See WKP 97, p. 1 and WKP 219, p. 771 of the Smolensk Archives.
- 223 Belashov, No. 21, 1936, pp. 71-77 and 75-76.
- 224 C. Friedman, *De la Sainte Russie*, pp. 112-14.

- 225 *Pravda*, March 26, 1938
- 226 *Pravda*, April 13, 1938 and June 2, 1938
- 227 *Pravda*, June 7, 1938
- 228 *Pravda*, June 23, 1938. Also see G. Rittersporn, "Le mouvement stakhanoviste," pp. 270-71.
- 229 *Pravda*, July 10, 1938 and the speech by I. Kurganov in *the Soviet*, No. 4, 1938. The situation in this period and the following years is analysed by G. Rittersporn in *Conflits sociaux*, pp. 61-68.
- 230 *WKP* 195, pp. 1-5-6, 2-28-36 in Smolensk Archives.
- 231 See above, pp. 19-25 quoted by G. Rittersporn *Conflits*, pp. 11-17.
- 232 C. Bettelheim, *La Planification soviétique*, pp. 271 and 282.
- 233 Calculated from *VKh* 1958 g. p. 76. As is known, the increase in production in money terms tends to show growth rates higher than those measured on the basis of production statistics based on physical measures.
- 234 K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow, English edition, 1974, p. 244.
- 235 See above, p. 309.
- 236 See above, p. 309.
- 237 See above, p. 458.
- 238 See Vol. 1 of the present work, pp. 168-71.
- 239 Various aspects of this struggle are noted in Vol. 2 of the present work, pp. 240-41.
- 240 On this point see M. Anslet, *La Formation de la main d'œuvre qualifiée en URSS* (Paris, 1958).
- 241 See the observations made by G. Friedmann in his book, *Aspects du machinisme en URSS et aux États-Unis*, Paris, 1954, pp. 45-46.
- 242 *Intervyue s izobremeni nesporyadennogo rabotnogo i ustroystva na proizvodstve SSSR*, 1933, No. 59.
- 243 See M. Anslet, *La Formation*, pp. 126-27.
- 244 These schools trained 450,000 workers in this period. See A. Baykov, *The Development of the Soviet Economic System* (London, 1954), p. 117, which, however, represents only about 15 percent of the increase in worker numbers in heavy industry. Some of the workers who graduated from these schools, moreover, went through a short-term course which did not give them a general view of the production process in which they were a part.
- 245 M. Anslet, *La Formation*, p. 128.
- 246 The number of specialists trained by the universities grew from 10,000 during the First Five-Year Plan to 160,000 during the Second Five-Year Plan, reinforced by technical schools and special secondary schools grew from 29,000 to 521,000. A. Baykov, *The Development*, p. 154. The dominant characteristic of this training was that it was a self-form production. The instruction given was predominantly theoretical. However, this instruction was also very specialized. There was therefore a departure from polytechnical forms.
- 247 We deal with the mass repression and its contribution to the development of penal labor in Part 3 of this book. Here it will only be added

what this did to reduce the turnover in a system it provided both employment and the economic satisfaction of public activity. (Kopelov, 1950). In the second half of the 1930s there existed in each factory a certain state-owned section of the N.V.T. charged with checking the activity of the enterprise management and with using a network of informers to maintain a constant on each worker's level of demand. (Kopelov and Tannenbaum in the Soviet System. The American Political Science Review, June 1954, p. 28).

237. This is the subject of the fourth volume of this work.
238. Figures calculated from T.H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917-1967* (Princeton, 1964) pp. 52-116 and the
239. Although this kind of behaviour was not new (it appeared from 1918 onwards) it was often condemned by the high Party leadership but this did not prevent its continuation. At the beginning of the 1930s it was worse because the privileges enjoyed by Party members had increased and these became especially visible after 1931 when speculation was officially condemned.
240. P. January 1934 p. 22 quoted by Rigby, *Communist Party Membership* p. 104. Other indications on these points can be found in M. Smith, *The Communists*, especially pp. 138 and 207ff.
241. The main political motives for expulsion (that is expulsions for ideological reasons) the leadership's political line became important after 1933. The political motivations were then not generally enough.
242. The following quotations are from A. G. G. *The Russian Language* (London edition) pp. 75-76.
243. This means implying that these members had already been active in the past.
244. See above, p. 76.
245. See above, p. 77.
246. See above, p. 78.
247. T. Rigby, *Communist Party*, pp. 203-4.
248. See above p. 125.
249. The worker numbers are calculated from N.V.T. 1954 p. 100 and 101. (Kopelov, *The Planification* p. 306).
250. This report was made in response to an order of the Soviet government. It was received mainly by federal administration officials. The report was made more than for a statistical purpose. It aimed to give a certain knowledge of the economic and political conditions in the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was used as a document with the help of former Soviet prisoners of war and deportees who did not return to the USSR after the war. Despite the very partial and limited nature of which it was done this report seems to be reliable for its results. It had as well as the two major references mentioned in the notes investigated. There is a report of the work of A. G. G. (Kopelov and G. G. G. *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge Mass., 1964).
251. See above p. 101.
252. See above p. 104.

- 204 Smolensk Archive (WLP 190 pp. 8-9) passed by M. P. Kuznetsov, September p. 308.
- 205 See above, pp. 437-40.
- 206 R. B. Ross et al. *How the Soviet System Works*, pp. 185-87.
- 207 See above, p. 287.
- 208 On this and the following points see A. G. Gerasimov, *The Soviet Economy*, p. 245.
- 209 See A. G. Gerasimov, *Les Aspects de la planification économique* (Paris, French edition, 1977), p. 238.
- 210 These documents issued in 1936 were described as 'instructions' to enterprise managers and local or regional organs. For this the Party leaders, sought to rely on the public, asking it to 'enforce' local orders. The most documents that adopted were the following: 1. Resolution of the 1936 conference on the compliance with which requests and complaints from the public were treated. Smolensk Archive (WLP 190 p. 100) directed at the Supreme Court which prohibited the 'disgraceful' names of people supplying compromising information. See G. G. Gerasimov, *Ref. 1936* (Moscow 1975) p. 100 quoted by Bettelheim, p. 100 note 4, a document of March 1936 that obliged enterprise managers to publish the politically most important letters and requests and such letters should (see P. G. Gerasimov, 1936 pp. 54-55) etc. In 1936, the documents were taken at this time as the basis of the 'New Economic Campaign' p. 100 and numerous officials accused of obstructing the working right of the work of Soviet institutions and enterprises.
- 211 Thus on a letter of complaint may be read the following note: 'The Party's method of directing the administration. This note was apparently written by the addressee of the letter himself' (see Bettelheim, p. 110).
- 212 Smolensk Archive (WLP 195 pp. 52-56) WLP 195 p. 100. WLP 195 p. 100. WLP 200-215 See Bettelheim, p. 140.
- 213 Bettelheim, p. 100.
- 214 Smolensk Archive (WLP 195 pp. 52-56) WLP 195 p. 100. Bettelheim, p. 100.
- 215 Quoted by Bettelheim, p. 100 (Smolensk Archive (WLP 195 p. 100). This suggests the existence of a document which more fully expressed the views of the authors of the letters personally.
- 216 See above, p. 112.
- 217 See above, pp. 112-13.
- 218 This was essentially the case in different reports of *Problemy* p. 100. In the collection devoted to the subject of the draft constitution.
- 219 See for example the speech by Stalin on May 6, 1935 in *Works of Stalin*, Vol. 1 [XIV], pp. 55-64.

PART 3

Mass terror and forced labor

The brutal expropriation of the peasantry, the accelerated rural exodus and the anti worker offensives of the 1930s were accompanied, both as cause and effect, by a mass repression and a terror which allowed the development of capitalist forms of work and exploitation sui generis.

Repression and terror of the 1930s were linked to the completion of the capitalist revolution from above, which began at the end of the 1920s. At that time it was above all workers and peasants who were affected, but millions of other origins were also stricken when they were accused of being hostile to a policy that was presented as being the building of socialism. On the other hand, at the end of 1934, this same capitalist revolution embarked on a terror that was more 'individualized' and 'inquisitorial' than that which had preceded it. It systematically had recourse to other methods (long interrogations and tortures) and aimed at other

social targets. Among the latter figured a large number of Party members, economic and administrative cadres, scientific workers, etc.

The terror in the main struck not the 'guilty ones'. At first it affected men sent without trial to deportation or death, or it struck 'accused' who might be the object of a 'trial' that could be apparently metropolitan, but who were then sentenced even if they had not clearly committed the acts of which they were accused: these were the 'criminals without crimes.'

We shall see in Volume 4 of the present work that the transition to 'individualized' and inquisitorial terror was mainly connected with social struggles, denological and political, within the leading or privileged strata: those belonging to those strata were thereby placed in a situation

of enormous dependence on the good will of the Party leadership.

Through mass repression and terror there was achieved a social and political transformation which virtually gave birth to a capitalism of a new type, and which basically conformed with the ideas of the Party leadership.

Mass repression and terror

SINCE the first years of its existence, Bolshevik power had not hesitated to have recourse to brutal forms of repression and terror especially against workers or peasants who resisted it either for economic reasons (for example the peasants saw during the Civil War because they tried to evade food requisitions which would have left them with nothing to eat) or for political reasons (like the workers and sailors of Kronstadt who in 1921 demanded a return to the genuine power of the soviets)

Following 1917 and at the beginning of the 1920s repression and terror also struck of course, members of the old dominant classes and equally the special administrators who were working for the new authorities if their activity did not develop in the way the leaders wished. Thus in September 1921 Lenin demanded that officials working for the authorities should suffer strict discipline for their recalcitrance and that their trials should be regarded as a political affair. Instructions to this effect were given to the courts.

For most of the 1920s mass repression and terror were in decline. They resumed from 1928 with the recourse to grain requisitions and then collectivization from above.

I. The upsurge of mass repression and terror

Mass repression and terror began at the end of the 1920s. They were engendered above all by the anti-peasant struggle but also extended to the working class.

(a) The anti-peasant war

The historical starting point for the mass repression and terror was the anti-peasant war at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. This war resulted from the rupture of the compromise that the NEP had established between the peasant revolution and the capitalist revolution, a rupture which henceforth would be pushed to the very end. This rupture if we look at it schematically was accompanied in the name of the 'anti-kulak struggle' and of the building of socialism. It resulted in the expropriation of the peasantry, the destruction of the peasant civilization and of the experience contained in the latter. It led to the development of social relationships which slipped the rural workers into a new division of labour and subjected them to new forms of domination and exploitation. These upheavals encountered enormous resistance on the part of the peasants who refused to integrate themselves into the new social relationships that the authorities imposed on them. It was this resistance that brought forth mass repression and terror. Deportation struck millions of kulaks and alleged kulaks while millions of peasants died from a famine that was largely fabricated in order to 'punish' their resistance (the authorities refused to draw on grain stocks and let those peasants die who would not conform with their policies). This anti-peasant war developed in two great waves. For the first wave of repression there is an official estimate of the number of peasants deported. According to this estimate deportations at that time struck 240,757 families (representing about 1.2 million people). It was stated that the majority of these deportees were not put in camps but were executed in the populated regions of the North Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Urals. Those who were of working age were afterwards sent to work directly to the mines or to other enterprises.

some were on state farms. Others were authorized to work for kolkhozes in the regions to which they had been deported. In fact some of the deportees were absorbed in work camps, but how many is not known. However, it is known that the deportations were in the worst possible conditions, including starvation, death mainly among young children and old people.

The second wave, 1932-34, of anti-peasant repression and terror was not marked in any political official document or terms. Peasants were then deported for the most varied reasons. Many of those who continued to be described as kulaks or prokulaks were among them, but others were accused of "sabotaging" the work of the kolkhozes or committing theft or the theft of property belonging to the kolkhozes, even when it was a question of gathering or gathering of grain which acted as they did simply to ensure own and their families' survival.

During these years repression extended also through the progressive penalization of labour legislation and a further and an increasingly extensive application of Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the USSR which allowed anyone to be sentenced who had committed an act intended to weaken the working of the authorities. And the police and the courts included in this type of act the non fulfilment of a work or the more often of a task that had to be fulfilled. This widening of the application of Article 58 also resulted the sentencing of those who had made critical remarks considered to be "anti-Soviet" or "counter-revolutionary". Failure to denounce the author of such acts was also regarded as an act which weakened the working of the authorities, and was therefore punishable, which explains why the parents and friends of those sentenced were also sentenced in their turn. These latter forms of repression, which started not only the peasants, developed well beyond the years 1932-34, that is when repression was transformed into class terror whose main target was no longer the peasantry.

However, before this transformation into class terror attempts had been made by the party leadership to put a brake on the excesses of the anti-peasant repression because of the negative economic effects this was causing. At the beginning of 1933 the wave of arrests and deportations became smaller and the

it had a bad effect on production and even disturbed in some operations the deportees being transported by train. At the same time the party leadership made a momentary effort to put a brake on repressive measures, as is testified by a secret letter to the end of the main Soviet organs by Stalin and Molotov. This letter, dated May 6 1933, it was said in particular that

The Central Committee and Sovnarkom have been informed that in the countryside massive and thoughtless arrests still in part characterize the behavior of our officials. Such arrests are made by village soviet chairmen, secretaries of party cells and responsible officials of the krai and from these arrests are made by anyone who feels like it and they have absolutely no right to exist. It is very surprising that with this org. of arrests the police organs which have the real right to arrest, including those of the OGPU and especially the militia are losing all sense of proportion and are perpetrating abusive arrests on the pretext of an arrest, then investigate."³

The letter indicates that at least 400,000 (the instructions to figure which included some 100,000 deportees) 400,000 were to be freed within a few days there were to be transferred to camps, to the courts and the prosecutors were advised to curtail the activity of the organizations of repression.

But were all this? This situation had occurred by the end of 1934 after the assassination of Kirov reappeared on a even larger scale than in 1933. From the end of 1934 until the end of 1937 the development of terror quickly covered the country, repression and government weakness and opportunities of action.

(b) The anti-worker offensive

Although it is impossible to measure the extent of anti-worker repression and terror were apparently not

a large scale as those who had ruled the peasants. In addition it took other forms because the priority accorded to industrialisation did not allow the factories to be equipped at the same proportion of the workers.

Nevertheless it would be quite false to think that the workers were not touched by the repression. On the one hand the testimony of those who were held in the camps, who came out of them and were able to make known what life was like in them at different times* reveals that a large number of workers were in the camps. On the other hand it is known that during the 1930s many factories were managed by the NKVD and that the workers who worked in them were those who had been sentenced. Finally the working class was hit throughout the 1930s by various repressive prescriptions, general prescriptions like Article 58 of the Criminal Code, which allowed many workers to be sentenced for non fulfilment of work or for anti Soviet talk, the slightest infraction could be described as such) and penal prescriptions of the Labor discipline.

Repression and anti worker terror had the effect of subjecting the industrial workers to a discipline that was in many ways brutal and to make them accept a series of extremely hard working and living conditions.

The threat of arrest or deportation of work without pay subjected industrial transport, mining and construction workers to the increasing demands of factory discipline which itself was pushed to an extreme point by the economic policy of the Party and by the requirements of discipline and attention to work which it imposed. This threat fulfilled the same function as that which in the development of western capitalism (especially in England, Germany and France) had been fulfilled by workhouses, houses of correction, houses of correction and other forms of forced labour and chaining of the poor.

The disciplinary function which repression carried out in regard to the working class during the 1930s in the USSR was however deeper than that which at the beginning of western capitalism was carried out by the houses of correction. It was a matter of getting accepted at the same time with a delivery of pain and an especially severe political despotism. Also the scale of repression and terror in the USSR was without parallel.

The repression had a profound "disciplinary" effect in terms of daily attitudes. In fact, part of the *zeks* (see list of abbreviations, on page xv), instead of being separated from free workers, were placed beside them, so the latter could see the miserable circumstances in which those who had been sentenced found themselves. The effect of terror thus imposed on the workers a discipline that was not only economic but also political: the disciplinary fear of criticizing the existing order.

Numerous testimonies indicate that the presence of detainees by the side of free workers was very frequent: some of these testimonies come from Soviet citizens who fled abroad⁴ and others from foreigners who worked in the USSR. For example, John Scott, an American who worked at the Magnitogorsk construction site in the mid-1930s, said that about 30 percent of the workers at this site were attached to various forms of penal labor: usually they were allotted to the hardest kinds of work.⁵

These various aspects of the mass repression and terror represent the most extreme forms of the struggle of the communist to subjugate, oppress and exploit to a maximum the dominated classes. They did have their equivalent in the capitalist centers and even more in countries under colonialism or imperialism. They can still be found today in a certain number of American and southern African countries. The development of individualized and inquisitorial terror which took shape on a large scale from 1935 constitutes, on the contrary, a particular phenomenon, connected with the specific form of capitalism which at that time was born in the Soviet Union.

II. The "individualized" and inquisitorial terror of 1935-38

The late 1920s and early 1930s were marked by the first return of individualized and inquisitorial terror. This began in 1928 with the trial of non-communist engineers and technicians at Shakhiv⁶ and continued through several other show trials like those organized against the alleged "industrial party" or against the "peasant party." But these were on very particular cases which did not directly involve members of the Party. The years

1912-1913 and most of 1914 were even characterized by a relaxation of mass repression and of the different forms of terror. But suddenly, from December 1, 1934 following the assassination of Kirov (Party secretary at Leningrad), the country entered a period of terror whose development was an initiative of the Party leadership. From the second half of 1935 and up to the end of 1938 this terror mainly individualized and 'questionable' took an exacerbated form. From 1939 to the death of Stalin in 1953 it became more routine (without becoming less extensive or less brutal—especially as it combined with new developments in repression) but there were new explosions after the war. Some of the occurrences which inaugurated the terror of 1935-38, as well as some of their most spectacular manifestations, should be mentioned.

On December 1, 1934, in the afternoon, Kirov was assassinated by a young communist, quickly accused of having acted under the influence of the ideas of old Party leaders who had been removed from power since the late 1920s: Zinoviev and Kamenev. In reality, the very way in which this event took place, as well as its aftermath, makes it almost certain that the assassination was organized by Stalin with the help of the NKVD. The speed with which the institutionalization of terror was unleashed amply confirms this.

In addition to details about the circumstances of the assassination, one of the most striking facts is the signature, on the same day as the assassination, of a decree which organized the judicial procedure of the terror. This decree was certainly prepared in advance. Another noteworthy detail is that the decree was signed by the state authorities without the Politburo having been consulted, which was contrary to all the rules about the pre-eminence of the Party over the state. It was only on the following day that the Politburo, faced with this fait accompli, ratified the decree. The latter radically modified judicial procedure: it ordered investigatory organizations to carry out death sentences pronounced for this category of crimes immediately, without awaiting executive decisions from the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee. The organs of the NKVD—that is, the police—also received the order to execute without delay those sentenced to death. The decree was published on December 2, and on December 10 the Criminal Procedure Code

was made of Latin and/or origins were stated in the NKVD and these could pronounce sentences without trial and without investigation or trial.⁴

On December 4 there was published a long list of persons arrested and condemned to death in Moscow, Leningrad. Similar sentences were pronounced in other regions of the Soviet Union, especially in the Ukraine. Ever some days later the real targets of the latter arrests by the authorities appeared. These targets were the Trotskyists or further oppositionists who were not even members of the Party, then all those later on as so-called "saboteurs," or "spies."

Before mid-December 1934 (in fact the Crimean case was settled before that) Party committees reported the results of the liquidation and arrest of all oppositionists and Party members. This initiative was met by a series of resolutions and a press campaign directed against the Trotskyists and the Zinovievites. At Leningrad alone tens of thousands of people were deported following this campaign. Those who had recently met Kameney or Zinoviev were also being targeted.⁵ On December 16 a resolution of the Politburo and the Committee denounced the anti-Party group of former Trotskyists as being responsible for the assassination. On December 17 the Moscow committee voted a similar resolution (December 17, 1934).

On December 22 Pravda published a list of arrested Zinovievites in which were included Zinoviev and his former members of the Politburo. A list was prepared of them for their "political responsibility" in the assassination. However, the political situation was still not clear and severe sentence against those two Party members. In January 16, 1935, they were sentenced respectively to five years in prison after which Zinoviev appeared in a "self-criticism" in which he declared that the pressure of the opposition had impelled certain people to criminal acts due to "objective circumstances."⁶

In the following months arrests and deportations made simple decisions of the NKVD proliferated. During the entire years of deportations led from the different regions of the Soviet Union to "all the prisons and the camps" the police

spoke of these trials as being the "trial of Kirov's assassins" the same term "Kirov's assassins" was used in the camps to describe these new waves of deportees.¹² Henceforth the sole existing statute for political prisoners was suppressed, everyone being subjected to a harsh regime.

If the assassination of Kirov was the starting point for a wave of repression whose scale increased from 1935 to 1938 with the most typical manifestations of individualized and organized terror occurring between 1936 and 1938.

One of these manifestations were the so-called "show trials" in Moscow but there were others. These trials simultaneously prepared (up to a certain point) and obscured the massive scale of the terror and its real significance. We shall return to this in Volume 4 of the present work when we shall examine the social, political and ideological contradictions which contributed to development of state terror.

(a) The three Moscow "Great Trials"

In chronological order these three trials were the trial which began on August 19, 1936 called the "trial of the Sixteen" after the number of accused, the two main accused being Zinoviev and Kamenev, the trial which began on January 21, 1937 where there were 18 accused but often called the

Pstakov Trial the trial which began on March 2, 1938 and frequently described as the *Bukharin Trial* because the latter was the principal accused, although at his side appeared a set of Rykov, Yagoda (the former chief of the NKVD and the organizer of the two preceding trials), Krestinsky and several other old Bolsheviks.

These trials took place in public and were presented with real stage management. Reading the transcript of these trials "it would seem that in effect not only the prosecutors and judges were playing a role which had been assigned to them but the accused were also doing the same thing."

The accused admitted practically all the crimes which the authorities required them to confess. If one or another of them strayed a little from his role, or momentarily hesitated to accuse himself, the intervention of the prosecution visibly brought

him to order. If these interventions were not enough "suspensions of the session" were ordered, following which the accused rediscovered the "path of confession." Since then it has been learned that the confessions were extracted by all possible means, including torture, to which both the accused and those people close to them were subjected.

These trials served as prototypes for thousands of others which took place all over the Soviet Union and resulted in death sentences, prison sentences, or deportation. They served as "demonstration of the all-powerfulness" of the police and to orchestrate great ideological campaigns aimed at proving the criminal nature of all opposition, real or assumed.

Without recourse to the proofs that later became available of the fabricated nature of these great trials, a careful analysis of the official transcripts reveals the inconsistent, contradictory, and implausible nature of the basic accusations, as well as the "confessions" which were used to "confirm" the truthfulness of the accusations.²⁰ Putting the known facts and the "confessions" side by side clearly shows the absurdity of almost everything that was "confessed."²¹

(b) *The liquidation of the army officers and the High Command*

Although it did not take the form of a show trial, the liquidation of the army High Command and the main military centers cannot be separated from the great trials. In fact, those who were sentenced to this liquidation were, like the Moscow accused, Party members of long standing, and they had passed the test of fire. The trials of these military leaders developed from the spring of 1937.²² They took place "discreetly" and rapidly.

On May 11, 1937, the Chief of Staff of the Far East Army Corps Lapin was arrested; he would "commit suicide" in his prison cell. On May 31, 1937, Gamarnik, head of the army's political directorate and who had always been devoted to Stalin, likewise "committed suicide." On June 11 there was the arrest, the sentence (in closed court), and the execution of nearly all the High Command: Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, and many others. The "purge" of the army continued up to 1938.

Among those who were dismissed, arrested and sentenced were seven deputy commanders of divisions, three out of the five marshals, thirteen out of the fifteen commanders of military districts, three out of the four army commanders of first rank, all twelve army commanders of second rank, fifty of the sixty-seven corps commanders, one hundred and thirty six of the one hundred and thirty nine division commanders, and from 15,000 to 20,000 officers. On an equally massive scale political commissars and naval officers were also stricken.²¹

Finally, the military leaders who were arrested and executed were accused of having prepared a "coup d'état" that would have included the occupation of the Kremlin by the army officers, the physical liquidation of the Party leadership, the occupation of the NKVD headquarters, etc. To these accusations were added those of spying for Germany and the setting up of a secret military organization within the armed forces.

The secret nature of the trials of the military leaders allowed the prosecution to dispense with publishing even the semblance of "proof."²²

We shall see in Volume 4 of the present work that the spectacular trials were the most visible phase of an operation designed to eliminate on a large scale several strata of Party and economic cadres. In essence this operation finished at the end of 1938, because the goal pursued was practically accomplished: moreover, continuation of the same character of the terror combined with mass repression was seriously disorganizing economic and administrative life. Nevertheless, although the intensity of the terror was then reduced, the terror was far from disappearing, because it was part of the technique of governing. In addition, mass repression continued because the authorities had to make their power felt by those who were liable to resist them, and it was necessary to continue supplying the camps with labor power.

(c) The continuation of mass repression and terror after 1938

In the short account given here of the continuation of mass repression and terror after 1928, it is obviously important to make a distinction between the years 1929-31 and the following years.

(1) 1939-41

In 1939-41 mass repression and terror took essentially two forms. Firstly, we have already seen what hit many workers, putting into effect of labor legislation of an increasing nature. Secondly, there was what developed after 1939, when repression and terror struck the population of the territories annexed following the signature of the German-Polish Pact. For example, a short while after the occupation of Poland by Soviet troops, the NKVD deported thousands of Poles to Siberian camps.² After the annexation of the Baltic states, deportations of the population also took place on the large scale. It is estimated that 170,000 inhabitants of these states were added to the deportees from Poland, Bukovina and Bessarabia.

In addition to these mass police operations, there was individualized terror which struck leading cadres, officers and higher officers who had played an especially active role in the execution of the anti-fascist policy and had been closely associated with the League of Nations. That at the end of 1939 the year of German-Soviet Pact, arrests were made of some of the leaders of the anti-fascist committees operating in Moscow and other large cities, also arrested were some of the chiefs of the spy network involved in the collection of information in the "Axis countries" (Rome - Berlin - Tokyo) networks which for a long time remained disorganized. Terror also struck former participants in the Spanish War while from 1939 the trials that had begun in 1937 were continued and brought to a satisfactory conclusion, resulting in thousands of sentences and executions.³

(2) Repression and terror during the war and after

The war and the post-war period witnessed a continuation of large-scale repression and terror. These operations reduced the population to silence and kept the camps well populated. The camps thereby received bits and pieces of population which were sent where the authorities thought they were needed.

During the war mass deportations continued, they struck the nationalities (Tatars of the Crimea, Ingushes, Chechens,

death of Zhdanov and other leaders.²⁰ This affair, which was also called the 'plot of the white coats', was entirely staged by the police services under the direct control of the Soviet security. It had several targets. It was a continuation of an anti-Zionist campaign that was in fact antisemitic, that was developed on an international scale and that led from 1945 to the indictment in Soviet bloc countries of many leaders accused of Zionist and other activities among them were Rank, Serebri, and others (who later would be rehabilitated). At the same time the campaign was aimed at the leaders of the Soviet secret services themselves (who were accused of having 'worked for Zion'). In fact the accused doctors were sent to the Gulag in April 1953 by decision of Beria, who was then in charge of security. But some months later Beria and other secret service leaders were executed and in the list of accusations brought against them among others were the same charges that had previously been brought against the 'Zionist doctors'.

After the death of Stalin, recourse to this type of vicarious terror which was on large scale and which was developed from an affair or show trial, became less frequent and accusations no longer tended to spread to ever new and increasingly important circles. However, the recourse to fabricated accusations did not disappear. In 1955, for example, in this charge can be clearly seen the extension to new leading persons, the changing and extending of the leading position group, and the effects of the political changes affecting these states and this group.

In the Stalin period terror was combined with mass repression. In a situation characterized with a curatorial stamp the relationships of the leading groups with the social strata and classes of the population were very tense, but also allowed regular 'supplying' of the economy with new labor forces.

Notes

1. See the White Paper on the 'Zionist doctors' in the Soviet Union, 1953, in: Charles Bettelheim, *Mass repression in the Soviet Union*, London and Leiden, 1962.

- [illegible]

[illegible]

The supreme proof

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

As Solzhenitsyn remarks, 'the criterion which enabled the decision to be made as to whom should be arrested was blind and irresponsible: whether one was a hero of the Civil War or an old member of the Party, one went into exile' A. Solzhenitsyn, *Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 2 (1965-1980) (this Vol. 1 of *The Gulag Archipelago*, p. 86). See also K. Conquest, *The Soviet Police System*, p. 49, where different Soviet sources are quoted about the lot of the "nationalities" mentioned above as well as several others. Also see B. Levitsky, *The Uses of Terror* (New York, 1972), pp. 156ff.

32. On this subject see N. Bethell, *The Last Secret* (London, 1971).
33. P. Broué, *Le Parti bolchévique*, pp. 447-48, and Z. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).
34. B. Levitsky, *The User of Terror*, pp. 185ff.
35. M. Heller and A. Nekrich, *L'Utopie au pouvoir* (Paris, 1982), pp. 415ff.
36. See above, pp. 419ff.
37. See B. Nikolessky, *Les dirigeants*, p. 149; Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1961), pp. 295ff; M. Fatnad, *How Russia is Ruled* (New York, 1963), p. 50, and L. Shapiro, *The Communist Party*, pp. 549ff.
38. To quote but one example, when Bera was condemned he was accused of being a "bourgeois turncoat," an "agent of imperialism," and it was even stated that in a "closed trial" he had confessed to having carried on anti-soviet activities from 1919 (See the Soviet press of December 1953, especially *Pravda* of December 24).

The cumulation of mass repression and terror

MASS repression differed from terror not by the number of people that it affected (which in the circumstances was considerable), but in the fact that the victims of the former were stricken for acts that they were said to have committed or for their opinions (and the definition of "offences" and "crimes" stayed vague, with 'proofs' often doubtful) whilst the victims of the second were stricken—even when this was not acknowledged by the authorities—by reason of their social origins, their presumed attachment to a definite stratum of society or to a current of opinion or to an institution, or because they carried on certain professions whose members had been taken as 'targets.' Victims of terror could be pursued 'individually,' with investigations, trials, etc. and this gave birth to a special form of terror which we have already called 'individualized' and 'inquisitorial.'

In practice it is not always possible to distinguish between mass repression and terror, especially when the victims of terror were tried with due respect to the forms of penal law. Nevertheless it is necessary to make a distinction in principle between these two ways of subjecting the population to state violence.

The most obvious cases are those of the old leaders of the Party and of the revolution, accused of being—without the slightest real proof—spies, saboteurs, and agents of imperialism. Such accusations were sometimes made against

Party members who had never been opportunists and who had always supported Stalin (this happened often in 1917, 1921 and again from 1946-5) especially with the Leningrad Affair.

The cases belonging to this type of sentence were so numerous that it is impossible to list them. For example, there were the economic cadres working in branches of the economy who were functioning badly, who were accused of being saboteurs or agents of foreign powers, or again those who were in a institution whose director had been sentenced for opportunism and who in their turn were sentenced either for that reason or another (for example, Egenya Gantimajidova for not being a Trotskyist because she had worked under a institution headed of Trotskyist, but they brought against her the false accusation that even if accused for in 1937 of having participated in the assassination of Kirov, even though she had never loved it, Trotskyist and had no connection with this assassination). There were also all those who were sentenced to several years because they had "in their hand a dagger" and let fall some words "scandalous" and "seditious" (certain were accused of Trotskyism without even knowing what that meant), doubtless because the plan of the security organs ordered the arrest of a definite number of Trotskyists and they had stuck this law on a certain number of arrested persons. The arbitrariness of the arrests engendered an atmosphere of terror and favoured a kind of passive co-operation. The latter took the form of "volunteering" and was maintained by the existence of a vast army of internees, so many so that there was a feeling even in those strata of the population which were not proclaimed targets of the terror that "everybody was spying on everybody."²

Terror in combination with mass repression—that is, with a number of sentences for acts that were not although minor and which were covered by the extraordinary wide political legislation constituted an instrument of government. It developed on the basis of informing which became a civic virtue and of self-accusation. The methods of inquiry became more and more harsh going as far as psychological and physical torture and including threats against the families of the accused. The use of such methods succeeded in making self-accusation a common phenomenon which made the security services

speculatively testifying.¹ It facilitated the fabrication of accusations aimed at securing the political ends. The investigators had to attain this result. Their task was not to discover the truth, but to elaborate an accusation which would take its place in a general campaign fixed in advance, a plan which determined the conception of the accusation, of the investigation and of the inquiries which had to be obtained at any price, as well as the scenario of the trial.

Contrary to what the present-day Soviet leaders claim with references not to terror but to mistakes, the victims of the latter were very far from comprising mainly cadres or members of the privileged strata. However, it is on these victims that present-day Soviet historians (with more and more discretion, but their emphasis just as did the Stalinist propaganda at the time) The latter, in doing this, succeeded up to a certain point in giving to terror the image of a struggle against the privileged cadres who were abusing their privileges, and this explains why the terror was able to evoke some good will among the less favored strata and was able to give a certain populist basis to the authorities.²

State terrorist activity rolled along in violation of laws promulgated by the authorities but simultaneously it was able to assume the image of an extreme legalism. Thus in matters of individualized and individual terror the accounts of interrogations were most often drawn up in a strictly proper way, the signature of the accused had to be attached and the papers of the dossier had to be carefully preserved. Naturally, at the offices where the accused had to suffer and not appear there, no more than did dossiers concerning the thousands of "equilibrants" which took place without trial and even without investigation.

1. The scale of repression, terror, and forced labor

It is impossible to measure accurately the scale of these repressions because no official statistics of any significance exist on this subject. Moreover, it is probable that the exact number of those who were arrested and deported was no even known

by the Soviet leaders themselves. It is therefore only possible to put forward estimates using the testimony of former detainees or former members of the repressive organizations and some statistical data about the total population, the active population and the number of wage-earners. In this way, at least orders of magnitude can be estimated.

This situation was characterized by the "secrecy" of the NKVD operations¹ and also by the multiplicity of forms of repression and terror. The victims could be kept in prison, executed, sent to a far distant camp belonging to Gulag, put in a local camp close to their original place of work, deported to a fixed place of residence but without being allocated to specific work or allocated both to a place of residence and to specific work, but without being detained.

The variety of forms of repression, the variety of methods and the variety of sources for estimation explain why the estimates have been suggested concerning the number of victims which are very different from each other.

It is not my intention here to recall the various estimates which have been made, nor to subject them to a detailed criticism. I wish above all to direct attention to two points: the size of the prison-camp population and its living and working conditions. On the one hand, the number of deaths due to repression and the demographic balance in the 1940s, on the other hand. However, I will give priority to the problem of the camps which were connected with the principal forms of repression and, above all, the development of a *forced-labour system*. The latter constituted a specific form of labour which played a considerable role in the economic and social transformation of the USSR. In addition, its existence raises questions of history and of fundamental theory.

(a) *The birth and growth Gulag*

Prison-camps existed very early in the history of Soviet Russia but for a long time their population was small. As late as 1928 the population of the camps was estimated by a former agent of the GPU, Kiselev-Gromov, to be only about 30,000 people.²

This population played practically no economic role. It was

case up until 1927 the form of systematically exploiting the labor of those detained in camps was revealed. There at the time an official of the Soviet penal system can declare:

The exploitation of prison labor—the system of squeezing "golden sweat" from it—the organization of production in places of confinement, which while profitable from a commercial point of view, is fundamentally lacking in corrective significance—these are entirely inadmissible in Soviet places of confinement.¹²

In 1928 the attitude of the author lies concerning concentration camp labor changed, with the adoption by Sovnarkom of a decree dated March 26, 1928. This decree enabled camps to be attached to construction sites.¹³

Comments which accompanied the decree made it clear that the authorities henceforth considered that the existence of detainees presented a direct economic interest, that it was necessary to "increase the reception capacity of labor colonies" and to extend or to multiply those camps which were allocated to "productive work."¹⁴

Henceforth the camps rapidly proliferated. Also a decree of 25 February 1930¹⁵ accorded a special economic status to organizations using penal labor, the latter being used more and more in areas where free workers were insufficient because working conditions were very difficult: building sites at the Ural in the north part of Siberia and in the Far East, construction of the Baikal-Amur railway (BAM), gold mines in the Far north, notably at Koryma, and the Siberian forest.

In 1930 administration of the camps was withdrawn from the Justice Commissariat and transferred to the NKVD where it became the Main Administration of corrective labor camps. Yagoda was in charge of this activity at the time.

One of the first great works achieved with forced labor was the construction of a canal linking the White Sea with the Baltic. The construction of this canal took place between September 1931 and April 1933. Many people died there, in conditions which have been described by one of the survivors, D. Vitkovskii.¹⁶

At the time, the achievement of this work was presented as an "epic" by certain Soviet writers, including M. Gorki and A. Tolstoy,¹⁶ but they said nothing about the innumerable deaths which took place on this work site, just as on so many others. Afterwards "eulogies" of concentration camps about were made by many writers and Soviet leaders by Molotov at the Sixth Congress of Soviets of the USSR, and in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. For example, one can read in this latter:

The grandiose victory of socialism on all fronts has made possible the employment on a large scale of the work of criminals for the general construction of socialism. With the entry of the USSR into the period of socialism the possibility of utilizing coercive measures in corrective labor grew enormously.¹⁷

In the second half of the 1930s concentration camps which developed under the supervision of Yagoda¹⁸ went further: at first under the leadership of Fzhov¹⁹ (till the end of 1939) and then under Beria.²⁰

The management of the camps was carried out then in the service of the NKVD, called *Glavnoye upravleniye katorzhnikov* (Gulag). At this time, this service had two central directorates in Moscow (administration of camps and railways and administration of transport). The different camps were entirely subordinated to the NKVD. The system had its own armed forces, police, and was subdivided into regions. Thus, in the Kuzbass region there functioned the *Bezumezlag* system which managed a vast minerals production center and directed several sections and numerous camps (*Lagpunkty*) where there were several thousand detainees. The latter were supervised by armed sentries who could kill them on the slightest pretext. Apart from members of the armed forces, the camps had no other "free" men apart from the camp directors, technical workers, bookkeepers, "planners," supervisors of normal government stock managers, etc., were detainees. Among them one accordingly found the "Soviet hierarchical structure" with certain people with various privileges (especially privileges involving food rations). Most usually, those who had been privileged

... after their arrest rapidly gained some privileges in the camps, except when they had committed or had been said to have committed 'state crimes' of a special gravity.²¹

A. Solzhenitsyn is one of the first to have noticed that the hierarchical structure of the camps tended to reproduce that of Soviet society in general, and he illustrated this observation with numerous examples. He wrote:

This tendency resulted in the following: parables: the workers and peasants stayed at the lower level while members of the classes that were said to have been abolished or hostile received favorable treatment, enjoying privileges and being on good terms with the representatives of the authorities.²²

The author talks of the high salaries received by the concentration camp engineers (3000 rubles monthly) and indicates that the latter "lived with the CPU and Party leaders and united with them a sort of elite caste."²³

Penal labor did not embrace solely those who were in the big camps. In fact in 1934, when the old Soviet NKVD was formed, the camps which had been under the Justice Commission were transferred to the Gulag administration. The Gulag supervised the system of big camps, whose basic unit was the I.L. (*ispravitel'no-trudovoi lager'*) and the small camps, the I.K. in which were to be found those who had been sentenced to no more than three years. These condemned stayed near their old places of work. They could even continue in the daytime to go to the same factory as before their sentencing, but they received a reduced wage.

In other of its camps the NKVD supervised laboratories in which detained researchers worked in conditions less harsh than those of the concentration camps. This was the *sharag* system²⁴ described by Solzhenitsyn in *The First Circle*.

The construction of the vast Gulag administration accompanied the development of repression and terror and hence the upsurge in the numbers of concentration and inhibits or more generally the *zeks*. This upsurge of numbers occurred in successive waves.

(b) The population of the camps

I have already indicated the obstacles that one runs into when trying to estimate the number of the victims of repression in the numbers in the camps, nevertheless it is possible and necessary to give some indication of the order of magnitude which will quite reasonably be the figures which seem to me the most reliable beginning with those covering the years 1939-48.

According to Tallin and Nicolaevsky¹⁷ who quote an official of the camps Nikolay Kremov, the number of inmates in the camps in 1936 exceeded 660 000. The same authors estimate the number of camp prisoners at around 2 000 000 in 1942 whilst Weiss has the figure of 1.62 million for 1941-37. For 1938 this latter author suggests the figure of 4 million as the concentration camp population.¹⁸ In the same estimates that one can make today of the number of camp inhabitants in 1939 this last figure seems to me rather high (although it is not possible to suggest another).

For 1933 it is possible to reach, indirectly, an estimate that is at least as certain than for other years thanks to the population census whose results were published in detail in 1947 and 1963 at the same time as the results of the 1959 census. The figures made public obviously do not show clearly the number of concentration camp inhabitants however by comparing the population figures provided by the 1939 census with other data also published (for example the number of enterprises, wage earners and the number of electors) it is possible to suggest plausible figures concerning the estimations of this same year. According to Stephen C. Wheeler¹⁹ who has made various researches the maximum number of concentration camp inhabitants in 1939 was from 4 to 5 million.²⁰ In 1940 and 1941 this number doubtless increased but it would be risky to suggest figures.

It will be noted that the figure of from 4 to 5 million of concentration camp inhabitants in 1939 agrees quite well with another estimate that made by V. Janny who used the figures from the secret 1941 economic plan which contained data relating to the establishments and work sites administered by the NKVD and employing camp labour.²¹

(c) *The living conditions of the zeki*

It is necessary to say a few words about the living conditions at the concentration camp inhabitants, because they constituted a very important feature of mass repression and terror. Obviously, however, what can be said in this respect in a few lines is necessarily schematic and not capable of doing justice to an atrocious reality.²⁰ For this, nothing can replace the accounts and the memoirs already quoted, or gathering from former camp inmates.

From these accounts it is clear that the camp inmates suffered a work regime of extreme harshness involving very heavy tasks and very long days; in general they were undernourished and abandoned to the arbitrariness of the guards. The latter could use all kinds of pretexts to make ever worse the living conditions of the detainees and even to execute or leave to die, very many of them.

A large proportion of the zeki had to work in regions where there was intense cold and in which no free labor could have been persuaded to work, sometimes for twelve or sixteen hours per day. For example, describing the construction (by penal labor) of a new railway in Siberia, *Izvestiya* wrote:

Up until now, it was believed that the construction season could not exceed 181 days a year. The winter is very cold, 50° below zero. But the construction workers have proven that even in such conditions it is possible to work from one end of the year to the other without interruption.²¹

The newspaper obviously did not say a word about the number of those who perished having to work in such conditions. Nor did it specify that it was not only the builders of this railroad who had to carry out their work in a lethal cold but also millions of detainees allocated to the working of mines (notably the Kolyma Gold Mines), to canal construction, to big building sites, etc.

Meanwhile, the undernourishment which afflicted the camp workers had a cumulative effect. In fact, those who did not succeed in fulfilling their work norm had their already poor

food ration reduced. Consequently they became weaker and fulfilled their norm even less satisfactorily, which led to another ration reduction and finally to total collapse.

During the 1930s in the Arctic regions, the daily bread ration (the essential basis of nourishment) could vary from 400 grams for those who exceeded their norms, to 500 grams for those who fulfilled their norms by 50 to 60 percent and to 200 grams as the 'disciplinary ration'. Quite often the set rations were not distributed in full, especially the few grams of animal protein (salt fish) which were part of these rations.

Undernourishment and ill treatment in the camps led to heavy mortality but the latter constituted only one aspect (separated from the others only with difficulty) of the mortality due to repression and, more generally, the demographic effects of this latter.

(d) *The children in the camps*

It is impossible to talk about the scale of the repression and terror without saying some words about the way in which the state's activities affected the fortunes of a great number of children.

On the one hand, from the beginning of the 1930s with the deportation of millions of 'kzaks' and 'prokzaks' either their children were deported with them or they were left at the spot, usually abandoned by the authorities. They thus formed wandering bands of orphan children who could exist only by robbing, so much so that they were dealt with by Article 12 of the Penal Code.

At first the judges interpreted the code with a moderation that was not for long accepted by the authorities. The decree of April 8, 1935 explicitly laid down that children under 14 years of age would be sentenced to the same punishment as adults, including the death sentence and long-term deportation.²⁴ On May, 31, 1941—that is before the war with Germany—another decree specified that minors of 14 years should be prosecuted just like adults for crimes and offences not covered by Article 12. These two decrees and the practices that went with them showed in a startling way what was really meant by the

solidarity for the young – about which the regime boasted. The stories of former deportees showed that children were numerous in the camps even though they quickly died there.

Among the children who were imprisoned or deported were above all from 1937 the urban children whose parents had been arrested. Henceforth in the NKVD prisons there were quarters for children (*detpneumatki*). Quite often the children of those condemned to death were also executed.³⁶ This type of repression was not characteristic only of the *vozbovshchik na* but was still practiced at the end of the 1940s notably at Leningrad and Moscow in 1949.

II Repression and its demographic effects

Although it is impossible to estimate the number of deaths due to the different aspects of mass repression, an attempt can be made to estimate the mortality due to the camps and to the executions ordered by the camp authorities, and to try to construct the demographic balance of the repression in a wide sense. The latter includes the famine which struck the countryside in 1932-34, for this was due largely to the wish of the authorities to “punish” the peasants.

(a) *Mortality in the camps*

The regime imposed on the camp inmates was such that during certain periods deaths were counted in hundreds of thousands for the total of the camps – especially on the Vorkuta Railroad³⁷ the Belomor Canal – in the camps and mines of Kolyma.³⁸ etc.

The Kolyma camps were part of the Dalstroi complex which occupied a territory four times greater than that of France. Placed entirely under the authority of the NKVD, Dalstroi embraced the basins of the rivers Kolyma and Indigirka (north-eastern Siberia). There, among other things, were 86 gold mines that before the war produced 300 tons of gold annually (the equivalent of 3 m. lion dollars at the current price of gold). In the Kolyma camps, strictly defined, on the eve of the

was there were more than 100,000 detainees (this figure was widely exceeded in 1944-54). On the basis of death rates estimated by former detainees, it is estimated that about 3 million people lost their lives in these camps during the 1930s.³⁹

Anton Ciliga, speaking of the Kolyma gold mine and the conditions of their exploitation, observed:

If America's gold is washed by the blood of enslaved negroes, Soviet gold is washed in the blood of workers and peasants allegedly liberated.⁴⁰

The high mortality rate of camp inmates was due to living and working conditions that were extremely harsh, particularly because of the severe cold of the regions in which a large number of the camps were established (detainees having learned of the existence of cremation ovens in Nazi camps called the Soviet far northern camps white crematoria). More fatalities were due to the executions which escorts carried out: a detainee who strayed a few metres from the road that he was supposed to follow could be killed on the spot, and in a general way to bad treatment from the detainees' escorts. This bad treatment was fatal for the sick whose productivity was too low, or who could not be looked after. The mortality was also large among those who were contagious or vulnerable to contagion by an epidemic, and epidemics were frequent among starved and undernourished detainees. Solzhenitsyn quotes several examples of epidemics, notably that of an Asiatic typhus that could not be treated; it was eradicated in the following manner:

If one prisoner in a cell caught it they just locked the cell and let no one out, and passed them food only through the door till they all died.⁴¹

Bad murderous treatment was also inflicted upon those who did not succeed in producing enough, in the mind of the authorities, usually because they were at the end of their strength. These were the "goners," that were exterminated by work. Here is how the latter were treated at Kolyma:

Multitudes of "goners," unable to walk by themselves, were dragged to work on sledges by other

"goners" who had not yet become quite so weak. Those who lagged behind were beaten with clubs and torn by dogs. Working in 50° degrees below zero Fahrenheit they were forbidden to build fires and warm themselves. Those who did not fulfil the norm were punished in this way: in winter he ordered them to strip naked in the mine shaft, poured cold water over them, and in this state they had to run to the compound.⁴²

In other cases those who did not fulfil the norms were shut in an isolator without window, bed, and heating after some days at the end of their strength they were piled in and shut up inside a cart that was left exposed to the cold. In that way they died it was only necessary to throw out their bodies the snow would inter them.⁴³ It really was the 'white crematorium'. Obviously it is impossible to estimate the number of victims of such treatment.

(b) *The executions*

To these deaths should be added the numerous executions more organized but whose scale is no easier to estimate. Certainly some of these executions but a minority, were officially known: these were the people condemned by public trials or even secret trials whose sentences were published like the cases mentioned previously of the Red Army officers executed in 1937. Other executions took place without being made public following decisions by the judicial or security organs, such was the case of NKVD prisoners who were executed with a bullet in the back of the neck, in the courtyards or cellars of NKVD prisons. These individual executions were very numerous as is testified consistently by detainees of the time who have since been deported but it is impossible to know the true dimension of this. Finally there were mass executions, usually fixed by administrative order the latter seemed to have touched above all those who had been officially sentenced to 20 years detention without rights of communication. According to R. Conquest for the years 1936-38

there were 500,000 legal executions, and 100,000 in total⁴⁴ according to R. Nislovsky. Between 1949 there were 400,000 to 500,000 executions.⁴⁵ The figures should be checked, although it is obvious that the number of legal executions amounted to hundreds of thousands.

In any case, there are several material proofs which took place during these years, and the confirmation of the German-Soviet Pact when Poland, Rumania and Bessarabia were occupied. These executions of the populations of the occupied countries and the German people. Among the proofs of these crimes, one should mention the mass burial grounds discovered by the Germans in the occupied vast regions of the Soviet Union. One of the largest burial grounds found at Vinitsa in the Ukraine. Here there were more than 9,000 bodies. The victims had been killed in 1938, and a certain number identified by their families. The burial ground was very close to the town, and the own population had heard talk of its existence. The German and communist newspapers had announced the existence of other burial grounds at Leningrad and Novotomsk.

Whatever the size of these mass executions and the great minority of those who perished in the camps, the latter were not executed but were put to death, as we have noted because of the extremely harsh living and working conditions which prevailed. However, there are also other reasons for extermination proofs. Like the German-Soviet pact, a great number of deaths was due essentially to military men. The difficulty of that was in the extremely long working days which were usually accompanied by very heavy tasks, health services hardly accessible, and no recreation, which further exacerbated the lack of the balance, which the latter did not succeed in obtaining to recover. All these facts testify to the extreme cruelty shown towards the people of man shown by the authorities.

(c) *A demographic balance in outline*

Repression and mass terror in various forms (the isolation, execution and high mortality in the camps) and the families.⁴⁶

which had repercussions on the demographic trend which was also affected by the lowering of the birth rate, a separation of families, and by the increase in excess mortality associated with the general deterioration of living conditions.

Analyses of population statistics which show a rise from 140 million between 1925 and 1949 a growth of 100 per cent, derive to all the forecasts of the end of the war, and the information that the repression will be a disaster for the Soviet people.

It is not a matter here of discussing the demographic changes mentioned at various times.²⁰ We shall look for a more exact

the conclusions of recent work by Marxist historians, and present an evaluation of the demographic losses caused by war and repression and makes a distinction between the various sources of excess mortality.

Analyzing the official statistics Marxist historians estimate that between 1941 and 1949 the demographic losses were 10 million. Soviet population reached 200 million and with a considerable number of children who died of hunger the excess mortality of 10 million in the years 1941 to 1949 is estimated.

It should be added that the same author estimates at 10 million the losses suffered from 1949 to 1951 and which were not connected with fascist aggression. The repression was due to repression and terror of the Stalinist period. The losses reached a total about 20 million. These figures are to be compared with those of war losses estimated by the same author at 5 million, preserved even after the Cuban Revolution.

In reality the demographic consequences of the war were even more of terror and of families were even greater than the war itself because the repression of the Stalinist period brought about by the deportation of the millions of men and women of child-bearing age.

Of this we know a little more in demographic catastrophe

III The dynamics of repression and terror, and the "requirements" of the economy

Mass repression and terror developed under pressure from numerous elements which produced an immense demographic

contradictory effects. The decisive elements were put in place: the main element was the struggle of the leading group to strengthen its power.

From a historical point of view, in the USSR the first step in the unleashing of mass repression and terror was the operation from above. The latter could only have been achieved by these methods and its principal objective was political: the subjection of the working class to an unprecedented degree, extending beyond the factory. Equally demanded by the need for mass repression and terror. The same methods were put into operation by the leading group up to annihilate the remaining old exploiting classes, to oppose the challenge for power by the privileged social strata, to destroy all opposition and dissent, to thought in the party, and to defend its own unity.

This putting into operation of mass repression and terror tended to be self-amplifying, by reason of its nature and effect. In fact, it aroused among the leaders who had recourse to it a fear of revolt, and this led them to accentuate the repression. The remarks made by Marx and Engels about the Jacobins and the 1793 Terror are absolutely valid here. They often emphasise, in fact, that terror was largely the result of the power it created in the sense that it is a form of power exercised by people who are fearful. Thus Engels wrote in a letter to Marx in September 4, 1830:

Terror is above all useless atrocities carried out by people who are themselves frightened and who in this way wish to calm themselves.²⁴

In this sense the very development of repression and terror on a large scale of trials, executions and deportations, in fact, tended to punctuate acts of sabotage, treason, spying, etc., thereby magnifying created an atmosphere which intoxicated the leaders themselves. The latter ended by seeing threats everywhere: they were themselves terrorised and demanded that the security services were more and more vigilant and active.²⁵

Keeping in mind concrete circumstances, the thesis of Hannah Arendt that totalitarian terror is launched when

The additional factor knows that he has no longer any need to be frightened - he would seem to contradict the factor of fear. In reality the anti-personal terror was born and almost presents in itself it is true that it was more terror when the latter were shattered but the starting point was the terror the fear actually experienced by the authorities. In the end was the terror which from 1934 struck the Party, the workers who had shown latitude all between 1932 and 1934, at the end would not purely and simply return to the bosom of the leading group and who even tried to redress the power there again. Terror continued to develop when a material resistance had become impossible but the development of the leading group continued to develop, even imaginary factors contributed to the development.

The self-propulsion of the terror was the result of the element as he felt that those who were in charge of the work were operating the relations of the NKVD and the police organs were frightened of being accused of weakness and of an attitude towards the enemies and they did not want to see the body who had been concerned in the attack there was the shadow of the slightest suspicion from those who were not and who passed through the hands of the NKVD and escaped the most severe sentences. In these circumstances the NKVD drove on their own lines, in their own way, and also prepared new cases. In the end they felt there was but one way to get a list of accusations - they could not ask the Party apparatus was led out of town with an arrest order. As they if the authorities had not put in the list would have contained a new wave of development, a new wave of terror. The dynamics of the terror were also very much as they already been noted. In the second phase of the process the leaders who wished to provide an outlet for the power of the workers. The cadres who led on the ground the process and terror served as managers. The leading group regarded them as responsible for a social and economic situation which was intolerable to the population during the 1930s to lead the restoration of the workers and to preserve its power.

The development of terror followed a complex dynamic which engendered an internal factor which could not be

the intentions of those who had laid her out. Once it was in action the repression and terror machine could grab many more men and women than had been at first envisaged, thus bringing perverse political and economic effects along with it.

However, the dynamics of repression and terror was not only political it was also economic. By mobilizing vast quantities of penal or concentration-camp labor, mass repression and terror entered into a development which pertained to the use of non-free workers whose place of residence, conditions and nature of work were fixed in an entirely authoritarian fashion by those who employed them. Thus it appeared, on large scale, a specific type of exploitation that can be reduced to a sort of 'state slavery' subject to the absolute power of those who directed the work processes, who even caused them to a rapid death.

The specific type of exploitation was at first bound up with the accelerated primitive accumulation which characterized the Soviet economy of the 1930s. To the extent that it was bound up it was not specific to the Soviet system: the development of capitalism was accompanied by slavery whither, practices and forced labor, demonstrated by the slave trade of millions of black slaves employed in the plantations of America (North, Central and South), the reduction to slavery of the Amerindians (especially in Central America), condemned to work and die in the mines, and the conscription throughout the 19th century of Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese workers, heavily indebted and obliged to work until death for their employers, whose practice were their owners, and this not only in Central and South America but also in North America. What was peculiar to the Soviet Union was that the state, through its police organs was the 'employer' of workers subjected to this forced labor and that the latter were not recruited beyond the frontiers but in the country itself by judicial and administrative means.

However, in the Soviet Union this form of exploitation has a rather peculiarity: it did not disappear when the initial phase of accumulation in the 1930s was traversed. In the 1940s the number of workers in the camps and penal colonies seems to have been even higher than during the years 1931-38. It is known that these workers came mostly from Poland and the

main States. Then at the end of the war they were absorbed into the Soviet prisons and deportees coming from the German camps. Those escaped the Nazi camps only to find themselves in the camps of their own country. Even after 1955 when the 'excesses' had been condemned the labor camps could disappear. According to Khrushchev there were still at the beginning of the 1960s three million detainees in the Soviet camps. The vast majority of these were those sentenced under criminal law, the number of prisoners who could be considered as 'political' being only about 6,000.⁵⁴

The nature of the concentration camp work is not random. Its persistence suggests that this form of exploitation existed not only for 'political' requirements, but also as a long-term economic device. It is only a single step, easily made, to go from the theory that the system did not belong to a type of 'political' despotism. To a large extent this is what Khrushchev does when he says in the present Soviet system a 'political' form of despotism quite similar to that which Marx described as 'oriental despotism' or the 'asocial mode of production' in which the role of 'despot' is played by the party leadership which has as its object not preserving and agrarian relationships but carrying out a policy of industrialization. This view of things, work in the camps was only the extreme manifestation of the despotism to which all workers were subjected. According to Khrushchev the Soviet form has its roots in the class struggle of the past but was reproduced while being transformed. 'The main feature of the theory and the practice of Lenin (as Party leader and as head of state)' ⁵⁵

Such a description of Soviet reality is essentially metaphoric rather than analytical. It tends to hide the nature of production relationships and the mode of exploitation is a 'political phenomenon' a prerogative of the political distribution of power.⁵⁶

This description misses the radical difference which exists between the situation of the great mass of Soviet wage earners and that of the camp workers. Also it does not allow a grasp of the different type of situation between these workers and those subjected to forced labor in what Marx called 'oriental despotism'. In fact in the latter case not all the persons allotted to forced labor were usually there for only relatively short periods.

and most often provided their own subsistence and remained within the social relationships that allowed the reproduction of their labor force. On the contrary, the workers in Soviet camps were cut off from the rest of the world: they depended on their guardians for subsistence and a large proportion of them died in the camps without leaving any descendants apart from the children that they had before their internment.

In fact, the work of those in Soviet camps constitutes a form of exploitation *surgenons*. One could say, also in a metaphorical way, that this form of exploitation constituted a sort of 'state slavery'. However, this term is equally misleading, for slaves reproduced themselves and were usually liable to be bought or sold. So finally one has to acknowledge that his type of exploitation is not definable in terms of any other and must be described as 'concentration-camp labor'.

Assuming this is agreed, the question remains: to what economic 'requirements' were the development and reproduction of this type labor subordinated?

(a) *The 'requirements' of the economic administration*

At the most immediately empirical level, this type of work was firstly the result of mass repression and terror. On the one hand, the existence of millions of deportees and prisoners meant the establishment of an economic administration managed by the repressive organs, whose job it was to put the detainees to work. (On the other hand, once this administration had been set up, it was a lot of *production plans* that it had to carry out: to succeed in this it had to ensure a sufficient supply of detainees, which was facilitated by the fact that the NKVD was responsible simultaneously for the management of the camps and for arrests. Thus a connection was established between the extension of repression and terror and the 'requirements' of the economic administration of the camp system itself.

The existence of production plans allotted to the repressive organs and plans concerning the number of detainees is an undeniable fact. Certain of these plans have been published; others (although 'secret') reached 'western' countries, with

as the detailed economic plan for 1941 of which we have already spoken. This source has given rise to very different estimates of the labor force employed by the NKVD.⁵³ The estimates of N. Janey brought him to figure of 3.5 million for the number of detainees occupied with production tasks in 1941. Other calculations show that within a total gross investment program in 1941 of 37.65 billion rubles, the NKVD led with 6.81 billion (which corresponds to more than 18 percent of gross investment).⁵⁴

The existence of production plans that had to be realized with the help of concentration-camp labor led to the informal existence of "arrest plans." Many eye-witnesses confirmed this.

For 1943 the Yugoslav communist A. Criga, then held in the main prison of Irkutsk, noted that one of the main functions of this prison "was the transfer of prisoners to the Far East." He adds that the number of those who were thus "despatched" depended on the telegrams received from the clearing centers.⁵⁵ Some years later A. Solzhenitsyn in his book remarked that the "real law" of the arrests was nothing but "planning" which fixed the figures to be reached.⁵⁶ This "planning" was not exempt from improvisation, as was seen in 1937-40.⁵⁷

Although a large number of eye-witnesses confirm that the size of the camp labor force was largely subject to the requirements of the "economic management" of the camp, it is still true that the latter did not constitute an end in itself, and it is there one necessary to ask what were the imperatives to which it was itself obedient. One of these imperatives was obviously that of production growth, or at least the growth of certain outputs.

(b) Camp labor and production logic

Because of insufficient information it is impossible to estimate with any precision the contribution made by concentration-camp labor (either per al or general) to production, especially in those sectors where its role was significant, such as construction, mining, forestry, etc. However, it is known that this

contribution was considerable since it rested on the shoulders of millions of men whose work was directed and managed by an administration divided into many main directorates equivalent to real ministries: the Directorate for Timber, for example, for Camps in mining, metallurgy, etc.

The detainees built thousands of kilometers of railroads, canals, and substantially participated in the construction of industrial combines, ports, and new towns in the north. Millions of tons of timber destined for export or internal summation, and in mining for rare metals, gold, minerals, etc.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, recognizing the scale of the work achieved with the aid of camp labor is not enough to judge the size of that labor. Certain writers consider that this was a very decisive factor, for example. In a recent article, S. Rosefielde estimates that in 1939 the zeki numbered between 7 to 10.4 million.⁶⁷

In my opinion such an estimate (like some other works similarly overestimates the overall economic role played by camp labor in economic and industrial development in the USSR during the 1930s. As is pointed out by R. W. Daniels and S. G. Wheelcroft, if the methods and the data of Rosefielde are used the conclusion must be that in 1941 'Siberian penal labor provided more than 60 percent of all industrial production and construction'⁶⁸ which is in contradiction with many statistical data, including that of the 1941 plan mentioned above.

As I have already said, it seems reasonable to acknowledge that the number of camp workers was a maximum of about 1 million toward the late 1930s. It would then represent in 1939 and 1940 respectively 34 and 31 percent of the workers and employees in industrial enterprises, construction, forestry, and transport,⁶⁹ which in itself is a considerable proportion.

Many figures show that the labor productivity of camp workers was lower than that of 'free workers,' consequently the contribution of this work to production in the branches under consideration must be somewhat less than 50 percent, although nevertheless representing a very high percentage.

However, the commission of the authorities in these economic 'requirements' produced perverse effects. One of them, as we have seen, was the enormous mortality among concentration

camp workers, this mortally reduced the human capital pool and the labor force available to the Soviet Union.

Another perverse effect of the development of camp labor was the low productivity of this latter. Thus, in essence, transforming a 'free' worker into a penal worker led to a reduction of production rather than an increase. However, this assertion does not mean that recourse to camp labor could not obey a certain economic logic—two aspects of which must be explained. One was the minimal monetary cost of camp labor forces which did not receive wages or only very slight wages, and from this it follows that despite the low productivity there was high exploitation rate. The other was the very great mobility of the *zeks* whose labor could easily be subjected to the *prerogatives* chosen by the authorities. In this regard, camp labor had the 'advantage' of being more strictly subjected than any other to the 'economic logic' of priorities and of exploitation.

(c) *The "economic logic" of priorities and of exploitation*

The industrialization policy, as it was practiced during the 1930s, gave priority to accumulation and to those industries whose products would contribute as directly as possible to the increase of accumulation. This priority meant that it was considered relatively unimportant that the productivity of the *zeks* employed in the mines, forests or construction sites was less than that of the same men employed 'freely' in other sectors like agriculture for example. In fact the economic logic of the authorities impelled them to try to obtain above all the increase of certain products like gold, coal, rare metals, timber etc. and to give priority to the construction of certain industrial sites, certain railroads and communication channels considered indispensable for economic and industrial development at the time. In these circumstances it was of little importance that the decisions taken toward these priorities entailed a relative lowering of the average social productivity of labor and a general decline in the living conditions of workers.

In certain cases, the priorities thus imposed were able thanks to camp labor to play an effective role in the growth of

investment (for example, the extraction of gold from the Far East required the purchase abroad of important industrial equipment). In other cases the role of these priorities was purely illusory, for what was gained was often scarcely lost. For example, the White Sea Canal, frozen six months of the year, and certain items of equipment imported in exchange for products obtained through *zeks* labor were quickly put to use (or at least not badly utilized, sometimes even left to rust), and the construction of the factories which were to use them was not itself finished. However, these wastages, although frequent, were not foreseen by the authorities, so from the point of view of their economic logic, it could seem that the 'give priority development' to activities that allowed a larger labor force to be increased, and to attract to it the necessary number of camp workers whatever might be the cost in human suffering and loss of productivity. In any case, the wastage of labor and the inaccurate forecasts were largely felt outside the camp system (of which we will say more in the fourth part of this volume), but however, this wastage did not include the same loss of human life.

It should be added that to develop on a wage basis the same activities as those which were developed on the basis of prison labor, it would have been necessary to grant to the free workers allotted to these activities wages much higher than those paid in the more aggressive regions, and it would have been necessary to guarantee working and living conditions much more acceptable than those inflicted on the *zeks*. Otherwise, nothing would have persuaded them to go to work in sufficient numbers in Siberia, and in the extreme east and north of the country. However, such a policy of wages and investments in housing would have been in complete contradiction with the priority given to accumulation. I would have demanded, moreover, that in order that the higher wages thereby paid could be exchanged for products, the production of consumer goods be rapidly developed, this was totally incompatible with the priority given to accumulation. Again, taking into account the enormous output available for accumulation, it would have been necessary, in order to attract workers to migrate towards the Soviet east, to lower still further the real wages of free workers in the western regions of the USSR.

which politically would have been very difficult. So the massive use of forced camp labour was not only a means of increasing the economic output of the system, a system which had a very backward and backward-looking idea of a 'law of reproduction of labour power'.¹²⁴

There is one of the advantages of camp labour, its low cost, one of which allows it to be profitable even if its productivity is quite weak.¹²⁵ The profitability of this work organisation was even greater in that it allowed economists to make use of the use of expensive machinery in those sectors where it was justified. Obviously these observations should not lead to the conclusion that the development of camp labour saved a kind of economic calculation, because this development was always guided by a dynamic which obeyed essential political and ideological elements whose effects were far from being neutral. At the same time the authorities were aware of the abuses of camp labour and of labour provided by men and women who were underpaid and whose rights had been reduced to a minimum.

In the USSR in the 1930s camp labour was not solely intended to provide an enormous surplus labour force, it was also intended to produce an effect of terror and thereby contribute to the enlarged reproduction of exploitation relations which characterized the whole of Soviet society.

The role of camp labour in the reproduction of the Soviet system and national system evidently continues today, although this type of labour affects a lesser number of people than in the 1930s. Its role in the production of surplus value, however, remains considerable, for the wages paid to detainees are minimal (about 4-5 percent of the wages of a free worker, the detainees being housed and fed). These detainees take part in almost all productive activities, even repairs, plants and machine spare parts, furniture, clothing and shoes, etc. Labour continues to take place according to a plan, conforming to the requirements of production.¹²⁶ Part of these in psychiatric hospitals are subjected to the same exploitation. The role of women in this period labour nowadays is especially great.¹²⁷ Bearing in mind all these points, it may be said that other camps form a subsystem fulfilling important functions of integration and regulation in the Soviet economy and society.¹²⁸

To summarize, the development of mass repression did not occur in a vacuum. It was tightly bound to the policy followed by the leadership of the Party, a policy aiming to impose dictatorial power over the workers, peasants, and cadres. This policy was also bound to the process of industrial production which took place on a large scale and which subjected the country to the demands of maximum accumulation. Between 1929 and 1953 it cost the Soviet Union some 20 million people losses which exceeded 20 million people losses which were higher than those suffered during World War I. The policy passed through the camps tens of millions of men and women. The significance of the economic and political expropriation of the 1930s is fully apparent when one analyses the process of accumulation and the crisis in the Soviet economy.

Notes

- 1 E. Ginzburg, *Into the Whirlwind*, p. 131.
- 2 E. Ginzburg cites the case of a peasant woman thus sentenced who, knowing what Trotskyism was, believed that she had been punished for being a *traitor* (she having confused the latter word, which she knew with Trotskyism (see above p. 194)).
- 3 See S. Bialer, *Stalin's Successors* (Cambridge, Mass. 1980) pp. 11-12.
- 4 These methods have often been described. For example, by V. Kravchenko in Vol. 1 of *The Gulag Archipelago*. Also K. Kaplan's *Process* (Prague) being based on archival documents permits a close up study of the whole Trotskyist process. Kaplan shows that as had happened to other detained Party members had agreed to self accusation in order to save themselves thereby they were doing the Party a "service."
- 5 Not all those subjected to these methods gave in. According to the testimony of those who were sentenced to a prison or a prison camp, it was sometimes a less severe punishment than would have been brought by a court. Such sentences were pronounced by the secret tribunals of the NKVD or by courts in closed session.
- 6 This is a concept which A. Zisovlev emphasizes in his various books especially in *The Yawning Heights* (New York 1979) and *Le léninisme comme réalité* (Paris 1981). At different times this populism corresponded with a certain popularity of Stalin which encouraged a measure of identification (see the same author's article on Stalinism which appeared in *Pravda* in *Adhara*, January 1980, p. 83, or see by A. Zisovlev in *Russia's Path to Revolution* (London, 1981), pp. 404-5.
- 7 M. Fainberg in *Sovetskaya* notes on several occasions that these archives though extremely rich in information give no coherent information.

about the number of victims of the repression. The low figures that appear are very contradictory. It would seem that there were no statistics on this question except within the central departments of the NKVD.

- 1 Among the works that estimate the number of victims of the repression and the population of the camps, or the number attached to penal work, there should be cited apart from Conquest's work, the following: A. A. Erkhov, *Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party* (New York, 1954); E. L. L. and A. N. Novinsky, *Forced labour in the Soviet Union* (London, 1955); P. W. Schulte, *Herrschaft und Klassen in der Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt, 1971); H. Schwartz, *A Chronicle of Apparatus of Russian Economic Statistics in Service of Economic Nationalism* (NY, 1968), p. 114; M. M. Lary, 'Labour and Capital in Soviet Centralisation Camps', *Journal of Political Economy*, N. 5, 1970, pp. 100-105; R. Tucker and S. Cohen, eds., *The Great Purge* (New York, 1965); A. Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag: A Chronicle*. An examination of the sources and record of data forced about 1,124,195 in Soviet Slaves (January, 1968); P. Weiss, *Imprisoned: Unfinished Draft Study of the numbers of Soviet Forced Labour* (1974) (unpublished or printed); S. Wheatcroft.

- 2 One of the more recent and weighty critical examinations of these estimates is the article by S. Wheatcroft, 'On assessing...'
- 3 Quoted by Dallen and Novinsky in *Forced labour*, p. 52.
- 4 See above, p. 183.
- 5 See for this point Vol. 2 of this work, pp. 154-155, and the footnote there. There is the central publication *Pravda* (Moscow), 1970, No. 66-67, 1920. The decree of March 19 is quoted in A. Solzhenitsyn in Vol. 2 of *Gulag*, p. 71 which refers to TM & NK of 191, pp. 72-73, 61, PP. 365-72.
- 6 Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag*, Vol. 2, p. 71.
- 7 See for example the article of E. L. L. in *Soviet Slave*, No. 14, December 1971.
- 8 See a quotation from E. V. Kozlov's *Pravda* in *Solzhenitsyn*, Vol. 2, p. 59.
- 9 *Pravda*, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 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4. See A. Gerasimov, *Le Parti bolchévique*, p. 154.
5. For the repression of children and youth see M. Zolotarev, *Les camps de la mort*, pp. 44-50, and the book by M. Zolotarev already mentioned, pp. 104-105 and 107-108 note.
6. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p. 142.
7. It has been estimated that one worker died for every 1000 sent to the construction of these railroads (see D. K. Rees, *La Stalinepolitique*, p. 149).
8. For the Kolyma camp, see Shalamov's *Recits de la Kolyma*, by which is given the best account of concentration camp life.
9. See especially R. Conquest, *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camp* (London, 1978).
10. A. Ciliga, *Dix Années*, p. 336.
11. *Gulag*, Vol. 2, p. 52.
12. See above, pp. 126-27.
13. See above, p. 128.
14. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, pp. 523-29. The author quotes a former NKVD official who spoke of two million liquidations in 1937 and mentions a speech by a Yugoslav leader (of August 6, 1937) which mentioned three million 'killed' between 1936 and 1938.
15. R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 110, according to his author, the prison executions reached a thousand daily in some periods in Moscow alone.
16. On these aspects of repression and mass terror, see *Historical Foundations*, No. 3 (January 1964) of the journal edited by the French School of Studies in Criminology, edited by R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, pp. 482-83 and 524-25. See also his article at various places in his *Gulag* mentioning these large numbers.
17. It will be noted that these latter were used selectively, not only against the peasants in general, but more specially against certain nationalities. According to L. Plyushch, *Historical Foundations of Soviet Lenin's Autocracy* (New York, 1979), five million Ukrainians died as a result of the 1933 famine.
18. Among the older analyses I would mention, especially the works of F. Lorimer and especially his *The Population of the Soviet Union. History and Prospects* (Geneva, 1946); W. Eason, 'Population and Labour Force' in *Soviet Economic Growth*, A. Bergson, ed. (Evanston, 1953), pp. 121ff; A. Philipowski, *L'Histoire et l'économie de l'URSS* (Paris, 1957), especially pp. 53 and 65. The main Soviet sources used by these authors were *Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya, 1926* and Moscow, 1927; *Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya, 1927*, in *IZV.* No. 12, 1926; A. Sukkevich, *Naseleniye SSSR* (Moscow, 1939) and *Pravda*, March 2, 1939, June 27, 1939, and November 2, 1951. The 1959 census, published later, added much new data about the 1939 demographic situation.
19. See Makukidov's article, 'Portes subies par la population de l'URSS, 1918-1958', in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, July-September, 1977, pp. 233-65.
20. In the article quoted above, the term 'kisses' means premature deaths, 'appearances' those which took place before the time of natural death.

- *Geography* Vol. 2, pp. 148-59.
- 72 A partial list of these activities is in Vol. 2 of *Gulag* (pp. 34-43).
- 73 S. Rosefield 'An assessment of the sources', p. 65.
- R. Davies and S. Wheatcroft 'Steven Rosefield's *Alukha*', p. 54 in *Review* December 1980, p. 598.
- *N. Zh.*, 1958g, pp. 658-59.
- For those who put the disappearance of employment among the assets of the Soviet policy it might be observed that the 40 per cent (those who instead of being wage earners entered the camps) is very much greater than that of the unemployed victims of the USA and western Europe in the 1930s.
- 74 On this point see the article in the December 1980 issue of *Class Review* by R. Davies and S. Wheatcroft and that of the latter in *Soviet Studies* April 1981).
- 75 See A. Glucksmann *La Classe morte et le Manger d'hommes* Paris 1975 p. 128.
- 76 This does not mean that in certain cases the use of concentrations camp labor was carried on in such bad conditions that it could not be profitable. (See the example in Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* Vol. 1, pp. 580-87) but these cases were exceptional. In money terms the economic balance of these camps was globally positive although they were disastrous from the point of view of human life but this point of view is foreign to the "logic" that the authorities followed.
- 77 K. Lioubarski 'Un palliatif au manque de main d'œuvre et à la faible productivité du travail forcé des camps' in *Chroniques des petites gens d'URSS*, pp. 63-64.
- 78 See above, p. 65.
- 79 See *Femmes et Russia 1980* Paris, Editions des Femmes (1980).
- 79 R. Brunet 'Géographie du Gulag' in *L'Espace géographique* No. 1 1981, pp. 2, 5 f.

Capital and its Crises

The dominant aspect of the development process of production during the 1930s in the Soviet Union was industrialization. The latter benefited from maximum investment. The working class grew at an exceptional speed. Soviet industry experienced a particularly fast expansion.

Although there is no doubt that official statistics relating to global industrial production have a tendency to inflate the size of the result obtained, and although this inflation is due simultaneously to the way in which the statistics were calculated, and to the way in which the basic data were collected, it is nevertheless true that in the 1930s there was a real "industrial revolution" on a scale without historical precedent, but which has since had equivalents, particularly in Japan.

The index of industrial production revised by Hoxtenma (which seems especially typical) moves from a base of 100 in 1928 to 371 in 1937 and 430 in 1940.¹ Other calculations present a picture of an industrial growth a little less rapid, but which nevertheless was remarkable.²

The exceptional performances, however, should not put it to oblivion the serious situations in which they were achieved. Nor must they hide the fact that, according to the official statistics themselves, the rate of development of industrial production fell from one Five Year plan to the next.³

The fall of the industrial production growth rate cannot be separated from another very significant fact: the weak growth rate of industrial labor productivity, which contrasts with the scale of technical change that was accomplished.⁴

The slow growth of labor productivity, the progressive fall of growth rates for industrial production and, above all, the crises that the Soviet economy experienced, are manifestations of the limits of the successes brought by the industrialization of

the USSR. And this is not the only thing, for the beginnings of this industrialization were accompanied, as has been shown in this volume, by a serious decline in the living standards of the masses and by recourse on a large scale to penal labor.

Notes

1. This problem has been studied by many writers. These include especially D. Hodgman, *Soviet Industrial Production, 1928-1951* (Cambridge, Mass. 1954); A. Bergson, *Soviet Economic Growth* (Princeton, 1955); the part devoted to the USSR in *Capital Formation and Economic Growth* (Princeton, 1955).
2. In fact if one takes into account technical progress and productivity in Japan, the latter's industry has performed considerably better than Soviet industry did.
3. D. Hodgman, *Soviet Industrial Production* p. 89.
4. The diversity of recent estimations of Soviet industrial production growth with copious references, can be seen in *Slavic Review* December 1960, with its articles by S. Rosefielde, H. Hunter, R.W. Davies, and Wheatcroft.
5. On this point see M. Lawin, "The Disappearance of Planning in the Plan," *Slavic Review* June 1973 p. 283. According to official statistics the annual industrial growth rates for each of the three first plans were respectively 19.2, 17.1, and 13.2 percent, the latter covering the first three and half years of the plan. Of course if the elements of overestimation included in the official figures are removed, the growth rates appear weaker. Thus N. Kaplan has calculated that for 1933-40 the average annual rate of industrial production growth was 8.8 percent (see his "Retardation in Soviet Growth," in *The Review of Economics and Statistics* August 1966, p. 237).
6. Thus, taking 1928 as 100, the index of daily productivity per head employed in main industry was 167 in 1940 (that is the same as in 1937), this index calculated by Hodgman in *Soviet Industrial Production* p. 117.

Accumulation in 1928-40

BETWEEN 1928 and 1940 the Soviet Union experienced a gigantic accumulation of *material resources* devoted to industry, and especially to heavy industry.

One statistical index reflects the 'official' accounting for the material resource accumulation of the Soviet Union. This was the index expressing the volume growth of 'basic capital' (fixed capital at the disposition of the productive and non-productive sectors). According to official statistics the 'value' (in "constant prices") of the "basic capital" grew from an index of 100 in 1928 to 312 in 1940.¹

However, these figures have only a very limited significance. In fact, when one compares them with other Soviet statistics, it is clear that they overestimate very much the growth of material resources accumulated during these years. This overestimation to a large extent, resulted from the method used for the construction of this index, because:

1. The index does not take into account the greater part of the *destruction* of material resources suffered by the Soviet economy during the 1930s, especially the destruction that struck agriculture following forced 'collectivization'.² To this destruction should be added that connected with the abandonment of most equipment used by private industry and by artisans. In fact, from 1930, almost all this equipment was scrapped, because it was usually of no use to the state's large-scale industry.

(2) The official index was calculated in 'comparable prices' which means that the investments towards the end of the period have had to be "deflated" in order to eliminate the influence of the price rise between 1928 and 1940. However, it would *clearly* seem that the size of this rise of prices was underestimated and therefore the coefficients of deflation that were accepted were too small.

(3) The capital invested continued to be valued at its original cost and therefore its value at the end of the period was not reduced to take into account the wear and tear of equipment.

Although the index, which claimed thus to "measure" the accumulation of material resources in the period 1928-40, *overestimates the net result*, it all the same has the merit of giving an idea of the size of investment carried out during the three first five-year periods.

i. Investments made 1928-40

For the years 1928-37 an estimate of the value of investments is as follows

*Gross investment (1928-37,
(billion rubles in constant prices,*)*

1928-32	67.2
1933-37	151.7

Although between 1937 and 1940 the growth of gross investment slackened, its value ("in constant prices") still grew in total, by 30 percent according to official statistics. 'Between 1928 and 1940 the growth of gross investment was exceptionally high, on the order of 14 per cent annually.'

According to official statistics the investments made during the two first Five-Year Plans and the three and one-half years of the Third Five-Year Plan were divided as follows

*Distribution of gross investment (kolkhozes excluded)
during the first three Five-Year Plans^a*

(% of total gross investment)

Industry	41.5
Agriculture	8.0
Transport and communications	20.5
Housing (excluding individual construction)	11.5
Trade, communal enterprises, and scientific, culture, educational and health institutions	18.5
Total	100.00

It can be seen that industry received more than two fifths of state investment while agriculture was reduced to a beggar's portion (taking into account kolkhoz investments would not change this picture substantially). Housing construction was equally neglected.² A very large proportion of investment went to heavy industry (Group A) and to transport and communication, within industry less than one sixth of investment was devoted to increasing the production potential of consumer goods (or Group B).

In general the enormous investment effort of these years which was a heavy burden on the real income of the population, therefore did very little to improve living conditions: the principal exception was the investment made for education and health. However, these investment above all benefited the urban population. Moreover access to better hospital services was reserved to those who were part of the managing apparatus, and their families.

II. The economic weight of investment

For most of the 1930s the rapid increase of investment did not bring the expected growth of total income and of production. In fact the brutal and (in practice) chaotic increase of gross accumulation resulted in a veritable *dislocation of production*.

especially in agriculture. This for several years entailed a decrease in the availability of consumer goods.

The "economic weight" of the rapid increase of accumulation is difficult to "measure." However, an idea can be gained by comparing the rate of investment recorded in 1928 with that recorded in 1937. Between these two years this rate passed from 7 percent to 21 percent of the national product⁸ almost in nine years, which was an upheaval on an exceptional scale and it is understandable that it seriously disturbed the reproduction of the material and social conditions of production. The growth recorded for the rate of accumulation is in correlation with the putting into force of the first Five Year Plans.

Notes

1. Figures calculated from *NKh*, 1958g, p. 58.
2. For an estimate of the destruction of means of production in agriculture see N. Jasny in *Soviet Industrialization* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 81ff.
3. *NKh*, 1958g, p. 618.
4. See above.
5. The figures for gross investment evidently do not take into account the "investment" accompanying the process of primitive accumulation. Nor do they show fluctuations and regressions of investment which occurred during the crises, as will be seen.
6. Figures calculated from *NKh*, 1958g, pp. 822-23. The investments of different years are valued in prices said to be "comparable."
7. From 1929 to the war, there were built about 140 million square meters of housing financed by the state or cooperative organizations (*NKh*, 1958g, p. 636). During the same period the urban population grew by nearly 10 million, while part of the housing stock deteriorated, hence there was a serious decline in housing conditions, that became catastrophic (see A. Kopp, *L'Architecture*-).
8. National product and investment are evaluated at factor cost by G. Grossman in his contribution to *Soviet Economic Growth* (ed. Bergson), p. 8.

The first Five-Year Plans

FROM the end of the 1920s, Soviet planning was an economic, social and political reality. Plans were elaborated, discussed, adjusted, 'applied'. A large number of important economic decisions were based on them. The rhythm of development and the structure of the Soviet economy were indubitably influenced by the practice of planning. Nevertheless this statement must not lead to the conclusion that the Soviet economy was henceforth a "planned economy" in the sense that it was "controlled" or subjected to the plan. The existence of such a control was proclaimed by Soviet ideologues, who talked specifically of the "planned economy" and favorably compared this with the "market economy". Examination of the real movement of industry and agriculture, and comparison of the plan objectives with actual economic development rejects (we shall come back to this) the myth of a Soviet planned economy. This myth nevertheless has had a long life: this is for various reasons, notably that the concept of the planned economy is bound to the fetish of state and plan which developed on the basis of the dominant social and political relationships in the USSR. It is also because, as we have already said, the existence of the plans had an effective (although not always anticipated) action on the real economic situation.

I. Contradictions between economic plans and real advance

Taking an overall view of the plans worked out between the late 1920s and World War Two, it may be seen that this period can be divided into two sub-periods: the first from 1927 to 1932 and the second from 1933 up to the war.

During the first sub-period, and especially up to 1931, the plans became more and more detached from reality. The first Five-Year Plan was "revised upwards" in a drastic way without anything from the point of view of real possibilities justifying such a revision.¹

During the course of this first sub-period (1927-32) the current economic policy passed through three phases.²

The first stage came to an end toward the end of 1930. It was characterized in particular by the vocal struggle against deflation, and by the practice of inflation in reality. Thus, while the monetary circulation was rapidly increasing, it was being said that real wages would increase thanks to a lowering of industrial prices. At the beginning of 1930 a series of measures was taken which opened the way for a new wave of inflation.

Control by the ruble (*khozraschet*) was then practically abandoned and a 'credit reform' authorized the banks to provide almost without control, enterprise bank accounts with the necessary money. Once again there arose an illusion about the possibility of immediately abandoning monetary accounting just as in war communism.³ Pyatakov then declared:

The essence of credit falls and one can see the characteristics of the production and circulation processes in physical terms.⁴

At the same period Stalin considered that with the circulation of NEP it would be possible to organize direct economic ties between town and country through the exchange of products without recourse to 'trade'.⁵

At the end of 1930 a second phase began in which the accent was again put on *khozraschet*. A resolution adopted by the Plenum of December 1930 called for the strictest financial discipline and for the strengthening of the ruble. The second

phase of economic policy was of short duration because the objectives of production and investment which had been proclaimed previously were maintained. In addition, in June 1931 in the name of the struggle against 'egalitarianism' and against 'leftist leveling' of wages, the highest wages were increased. Economic policy then began a third phase.

This third phase was continued up to the end of 1932. It was marked by the maintenance of very high targets previously announced for the First Five Year Plan, and by the formulation of correspondingly ambitious targets for the second Five Year Plan. It was also characterized by a resumption of high inflation which took the monetary circulation from 4335 million rubles on January 1, 1931, to an increase of 91 percent over 14 months. Above all it was marked by the famine of 1932-33 and by real economic chaos. It thus reached conditions for a transition to a new period.

The new period (from 1933 to the war) was characterized by a reduction (but not a disappearance) of inequality in the plans, by a slowing down of inflation, by a wider acceptance of the free operation of peasant markets, and by measures on a large scale to measures of coercion and repression.¹⁸

The move from the type of planning and economic policy of the early 1930s to that of the following years was largely imposed by the crisis that matured from the second half of 1931 and openly burst on the scene in 1933. So far as planning was concerned the situation was so unfavourable from the fall of 1931 that the *Complan* journal *Planirovaniye khozaystva* ceased publication for several months (the last number of 1931 was sent to the printer on December 1, the first number of 1932 was put in the presses on May 25). In 1932 there was the legalization on a large scale of the kolkhoz markets where free prices were used.

The essential features of what for many years would be Soviet economic policy and planning were drawn at this time. These features were not the 'expression' of previous theoretical concepts (on the contrary the theory would be transformed in order to justify current practices). They were the product of economic, social and political transformation of crises and contradictions in the Soviet social structure: these crises and these new social relationships also transformed official ideology.¹⁹

When the planning of 1927-31 is compared with that of later years, it is seen that the first years were marked by an extraordinary "unreality" while the following years saw a certain (relative) "return to reality". The size of the gaps between plan and real economic change confirms in every case the absence of "control" by the plans over this economic change. To illustrate this fact, we will give some examples.

(a) The first five-year period

It has already been seen that the figures of the First Five-Year Plan on several occasions were revised upwards.¹ In thus adopting more and more ambitious targets, the Soviet leaders turned up their noses at the real possibilities and the warnings comparatively prudent, of these occupying responsible positions in the planning organizations. The whole picture of the political situation in fact impelled the leading elements of the Party to adopt "objectives" that were higher and higher, and to silence those who reminded them of the dangers of false "ambitious" plans. The "objectives" written into the plans were even then imposed against immediate reality under the influence of "abstract requirements". Thus, in 1930, the first Five Year Plan kept as a "target" an increase of 67 percent real income for the agricultural population, and of 71 percent for the non-agricultural population, and this at a time when measures had to be taken cope with a real lowering of the standard of life.

(1) "Targets" and results of the First Five-year Plan

Plans elaborated in these circumstances could only be mythical. To show this, it is not necessary to compare in detail the "targets" and the results of the different plans.² It is sufficient to examine a few figures.

Let us take the First Five-Year Plan. It is known that, according to official declarations, this was to have been "practically achieved" in four years and three months (at the end of 1932

rather than October 1929. The statement, however, was incorrect. Thus, when Stalin assessed the balance sheet of the first five-year plan, he has to wait till January 1934, the completed financial year of the U.S.S.R. He alluded that "the planned industrial production as a whole has been achieved to 100 per cent" — towards the end of the first year of the five-year period.¹⁹

If this statement had been correct it could have produced the effect that the industrial plan had been practically fulfilled (at least overall) but the facts were very different.

Firstly, between the time when the First Five-Year Plan was adopted in April 1929 and when its targets were declared to be achieved or "exceeded" the plan has been modified several times. The was left of the original 1929 target for the first year of the plan was only 100 per cent but abandoned during the first two years and replaced by more and more, more and more, the same.

However, even if one accepts such a revised and inflated estimation of the figures reveals that the plan of 1929 was only half way "fulfilled."

According to the resolution adopted in April 1930 by the Sixteenth Party Conference, industrial production should have risen from 18.1 billion rubles in 1927-28 to 43.1 billion at the end of the First Plan. An increase of 136 per cent. But according to the estimates of Hodgman, estimates which rest on a false foundation, the production of main industry rose by 72 per cent.²⁰ However, main industry was developed much more rapidly than industry as a whole. The achievement rate of the industrial plan is therefore certainly very much below 100 per cent calculated for the industry that was estimated.

Because of the uncertainty which surrounds these measures of production expressed in prices, it is usual to quote a number of statistics expressed in physical quantities (tonnage, kilowatt hours, and meters). In fact, the latter figures, although more exact, that are very weak, using the official sources themselves. Here a resume of these rates: coal 86 per cent, oil 74 per cent, pig iron 62 per cent, steel 57 per cent, sheet metal 54 per cent, machine cloth 54 per cent, cotton cloth 54 per cent, paper 52 per cent, crystallized soda 45 per cent.

One observation could be added: it is misleading to calculate the achievement rate of plans by comparing the amount

provided with what should have been produced according to the plan provisions. In fact, the 'objective' of the plans was a certain increase of production. So it is by comparison with the increase that the achievement rate should be calculated. In the cases above this gives rates that are much lower. For example, the amount of steel produced annually was to increase according to the initial plan by 6.1 million tons. The actual increase was 1.6 million tons: an achievement rate of the target increase of only 26.2 percent.¹⁶ Moreover, for a certain number of industrial products instead of the increases provided by the Five Year Plan there were declines to be recorded. Such was the case for most industrial production connected with agriculture: cotton cloth, woollen cloth, linen cloth and sugar.

(2) Revision and actual abandonment of targets of the First Five-Year Plan

The changes made in the First Five-Year Plan after April 1929 in no way helped to lessen the mythical character of the 'targets'. On the contrary they exacerbated them. They implied in fact an abandonment of the initial plan as more and more ambitious and less and less achievable targets were adopted. Here are some examples.

At the beginning of 1930 the target production figures that had to be achieved in the last year of the First Plan rose to really fantastic levels. Hereafter it was a question of producing at the end of the five-year period 120-130 million tons of coal instead of the 75 million tons initially set; 17-20 million tons of pig iron instead of 10 million; 450,000 tractors (instead of 50,000).¹⁷

The remark is necessary here: such 'targets' no longer corresponded to what one could reasonably call production forecasts. Rather they corresponded to a forecast of needs which were engendered by the race for accumulation and the promises that had been made. Thus there was an 'upsurge of abstract requirements' that 'imposed themselves' in actual fact on the authorities as well as on the planners.¹⁸ The latter were summoned by the political leaders to establish new plans incorporating targets that were more and more elevated.¹⁹ The end result, therefore, were figures that were incoherent and unconnected with real possibilities.²⁰

In 1930 and 1931 there was no time to prepare a new Five-Year Plan, and the latter would not have been able to "hold together" the figures of all the projects that had been started. The political leadership then gave up the idea of elaborating a new plan. In its eyes, rhythms decide everything, the "targets" became "challenges that it was necessary to take up" and the "planners" were regarded as hindrances and "old hat," and it was decided to get rid of them. Gosplan was renovated, with men like Krzhizhanovskii and Strumilin — old Party members devoted to the leadership — being cast aside and replaced by more docile men.

On the eve of the Sixteenth Party Congress (June 20 to July 13, 1930) which witnessed the victory of those who supported an industrialization even more rapid than that forecast by the plan adopted in 1929², the only acceptable perspective was one of rhythmic progress and ceaselessly increasing industrial production. Kaibyshev at this time said that it was necessary "to double each year investments in fixed capital" and increase production by 30 percent each year.³

Bearing in mind the results actually achieved, it is not surprising that at the beginning of 1933 all these "targets" were "forgotten" — that is why the balance sheet of the First Five-Year Plan, presented by Stalin at this time, referred simply to the figures of the initial plan even though it had been abandoned for a most three years.

(b) *The second five-year period*

In 1933 and 1934 a Second Plan project and then a definitive plan were elaborated.⁴ The "targets" set by these two documents were very close, but the second was more "modest" and more "realistic" than the first. It is this which was adopted by the Seventeenth Party Congress which met in February and March 1934, that is, during the second year of the Plan's course.⁵

Because of this greater "realism" the percentages of "fulfillment" of the second Five-Year Plan were much higher than those of the First. For industry taken as a whole it even reached, globally, a "fulfillment" of 102 percent. However, the global

figures are overestimated because they were calculated in prices and are therefore "swollen" by the rise in the latter (although the statisticians claimed to have eliminated the effects of this price rise in their calculations). Moreover, the global figures obscured considerable inequalities in the 'fulfillment rate.' These inequalities meant that the structure and the proportions of the economy were not in any way transformed "in conformity" with the plan. Here again the idea of a 'control by the plan over economic change seems mythical, thus a so being revealed by the economic crises, which were obviously not "programmed."

So as not to clutter this exposition by quoting too many figures, we will limit ourselves to indicating the "fulfillment percentage for certain of the targets' of the Second Plan fixed in quantity rather than prices and comparing the target production with the actual production.

"Fulfillment" percentage of production targets set by the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37)²⁷

Electricity	96	Cotton cloth	64
Oil	61	Woolen goods	46
Cool	88	Paper	83
Pig-iron	91	Sugar	104
Leather footwear	107		

It can be seen that the 'fulfillment' percentages here vary between 46 and 107. It also may be seen how enormous was the "lag" in production of industrial consumer goods, which the Second Plan had 'anticipated' would increase enough to quickly raise consumption levels.

In agriculture the 'fulfillment' of the Plan was very weak, as much in cereal (despite the exceptional harvest of 1937) as in livestock. For the first, the average harvest was only 76 percent of what had been forecast for the average of the annual plans.²⁸ For the second, the number of cows only represented 78 percent of the targets.²⁹ Production actually obtained in 1937 was therefore very distant from the 'targets' of the plan.

The "targets" fixed in the Second Plan also reflect essentially the 'abstract requirements' of accelerated accumulation (thus in spite of the momentary brake imposed by the 1933 crisis).

and the way in which the Party leadership took care of these requirements,' which to it seemed possible, desirable or necessary. They were a product of the economic and political situation as it was understood at the top of the Party seen through the ideological forms which were dominant there. Part of the targets retained in this way were only there as promises to be followed by no concrete action.³¹ Other targets those which actually seemed to be 'essential' were on the other hand the occasion for 'priority' action continued throughout the Five-Year period (such was the case with what was done to increase the output of the main means of production).

(c) *The third five-year period*

The working out of the Third Five Year Plan took place in a period of extreme political tension, of mass repression and of the physical elimination of most of the old Party leadership. In these circumstances, the Third Plan was presented for the ratification by a Party Congress only in March 1939 (at the Eighteenth Congress), more than two years after the beginning of the five-year period. More exactly, the Congress was summoned to ratify only the 'main tasks' of the Third Plan.³² A definitive version of the latter would never be published, the document published in 1939 is much less detailed than those of the two previous plans.³³

A comparison of actual economic change with the 'targets' written in this document show once more the mythical nature of these 'targets'. One can see this by examining the following figures, which express in percentages the increases forecast by the Third Five-Year Plan and the increases actually obtained in 1949 when three-fifths of the five year period had passed:

Actual increases of production as percentages of the increases anticipated for 1949 by the Third Five Year Plan³⁴

Electricity	32.7	Woolen goods	13.0
Coal	37.2		
Coke	12.7	Sugar	(production decline of
Oil	11.7		310,000 tons instead of
Steel	5.0		planned 1,070,000
Cotton cloth	32.6		ton increase)

As may be seen, not only was the 1940 level far from the 50 to 60 percent of the production increase forecast for 1942 but in addition, the inequalities of gross rates (compared to those forecast) are considerable. Leaving on one side the falls in production, the above percentages vary in their relationship by a ratio of 1 to 6.4.³⁴

There is something more serious in a period when war threatened, the production plans of oil, coal, and steel have only miserable "fulfillment rates." In fact, during the first three years of the Third Plan the production of petrol, coke and steel almost stagnated compared to 1937.

The figures show simultaneously the scale of the disorganization which then reigned in essential industries, and the absence of "control" exercised by the Plan over real economic development.³⁵

II. The effects of the development of contradictions between plans and realities

The inadequacy of the plans in relation to reality and, more generally, to the objective economic possibilities, gave rise to a series of consequences. The latter concerned especially the aggravation of the contradictions in the sphere of production and exchange.

(a) *The cycle of shortages and the "target inflation" of the plans*

Putting into action plans that were partly unrealizable, because sufficient material and human means were not available, inevitably brought shortages.

During the 1930s and especially during the first five-year period, the appearance of shortages, as is known, led the Soviet leaders to raise rather than lower the plan "targets," by establishing task for the production of "deficit" products that were progressively bigger. It was in this way, for example, that the "targets" of production fixed for metallurgy showed an extraordinary growth between 1929 and 1932.

Far from reducing the shortages, recourse to such plan revisions obviously only made the shortages worse. In fact, the fixing of supplementary 'targets' required the construction of extra factories, which made necessary the provision of additional means. For example, the starting of new industrial construction sites required still more steel, so much so that it became more and more scarce.

In concrete terms, one could say that the list of some 1200 industrial construction sites—contained in the third volume presenting the First Five Year Plan—was virtually doubled during the months which followed the adoption of the Plan. Consequently, against the 22 billion rubles which, according to the Five-Year Plan, had to be invested in industry, construction and transport, there was in the end an actual sum for investment of 41.6 billion.³⁰

Such a growth of investment weighed heavily on the resources available for consumption. It also brought about a tremendous disequilibrium between the available material resources and the needs of the different construction sites.

(b) *Production anarchy and the slow-down of growth*

During the 1930s attempts aiming to resolve the problems posed by the development of shortages by inflating the 'targets' of the plans led to the hasty adoption of industrial projects which often did not rest on any serious preliminary studies. This helped to intensify the anarchy of production which was in any case engendered by the setting up of construction sites and factories which could not receive the necessary amounts of raw materials, fuel, or labor to function regularly.

However, the atmosphere of 'urgency' fostered by the political leadership, wishing to push the rhythm of growth higher and higher, even when its decisions disorganized production and ended up by hindering the long-term maintenance of high levels, made it quite exceptional for those on the ground who saw the unrealizable nature of a large part of the 'targets' imposed by the upper political levels—to make a protest.

No warnings like the following formulated by an old expert entrusted with putting into operation an industrial program of increased production were quite rare. He addressed the CC in the following terms:

I cease to be responsible for the planning department. I cease for the target fixed at 40 million tons as purely arbitrary. More than one third of the iron must come from unexplored regions, which is like sharing the skin of the bear before trapping him, or even before knowing where he is. In addition, the present three cracking plants must become four by the end of the five-year period. This is due to the acute lack of metal and the fact that the highly complex technique of cracking has still not been mastered by us...²⁷

The multiplication of such programs at the beginning of the First Five Year Plan meant that the share of the total industrial investment represented by investment frozen in uncompleted programs rose to about 40 percent in 1933. Thus these programs immobilized enormous amounts of steel which was in deficit anyway. This in turn hindered the full utilization of existing factories and slowed down the development of production in these factories and industrial production in general.

Improvised and badly coordinated programs springing up on the wave of an accumulation which rapidly increased, were equally numerous in the construction of new industrial centers. These new centers were to be established in coordination with the creation of new factories. Thus the Soviet planner N. Hrennikov said that "a whole series of towns have been built without their plans having been approved—in other words—in an anarchic way. Consequently the infrastructures of these towns were often without elementary conveniences (water drains, etc.) necessary for urban life."

Without exception the constructions which developed during the 1930s were of such a size that almost all people doubtless few who allowed themselves to join in the unrealistic character of the "targets" of the plans (initial or revised) were criticised or severely condemned without their arguments being discussed.

The political power thus acted as an agent for the constraints directed toward an emulation. It raged more and more sharply against those who thought they could transcend the contradictions between plan and reality and the economic anarchy which resulted from them. Such people were usually considered "traitors" because, in the eyes of the leaders, they at least demonstrated a lack of confidence in the possibilities of the system, or revealed their "outdated concepts."

The production anarchy which developed in these circumstances helped to slow down the development of industry and to lower agricultural production. In fact, as has been seen, a large proportion of the material resources (available in insufficient quantity) was immobilized in equipment or machines which were not working or which were badly used. Thus current production was lower than it could have been with different targets.

The adoption of unrealizable "targets" had also cumulative effects: the impossibility of realizing certain anticipated targets blocked the achievement of other targets which could be achieved only if the first were achieved. For example, a low "fulfillment rate" of steel production entrained a fulfillment rate even lower for other plans of production or investment which required steel. Thus during the First Five Year Plan certain factories could not be built because of lack of steel, hence the deersory "fulfillment rates" for certain products like fertilizers.²⁰

Production anarchy showed itself also in the distribution of production. Thus the fluctuation in the output of numerous factories and the more or less long stoppages in activity at various construction sites meant that part of the output of the new factories which should have been sent to nearby consumers, had to be sent thousands of kilometers, which overcrowded the railroads and caused real chaos in transportation.

Finally, the stock of agricultural machines and tractors usually functioned only to the extent of about half of its capacity because of shortage of necessary spare parts.

Production anarchy and the unrealizable nature of some of the "targets" of the plan nurtured other contradictions which manifested themselves in the existence of an inflationary pressure that was almost permanent. The non-realization of

many production "targets," while sustained expenses reached or exceeded the forecast, resulted, almost permanently, in an excess of distributed monetary incomes over the availability of products for consumers. Thus in spite of "controls" and regulations prices had a tendency to rise and this even affected the "planned prices," above all those for consumer goods.*

The insufficiencies and the irregularities of supplies also had the consequence that part of the products were diverted towards "illegal channels" where black market prices ruled, hence the existence of a 'parallel economic world' which made what happened in the "official world" partly fictitious.

*(c) The application of priorities
and the development of day-to-day
administrative management*

Anarchy of production and incoherence of plans from the beginning of the 1930s put enterprises into a chaotic situation. Most often, they could not obtain the quantities of raw materials, fuel, equipment, means of transport, etc. which they needed in order to attempt to "fulfil" the plans which were fixed for them by the Plan and/or to avoid interrupting their production. In these circumstances, enterprises were equally incapable of coping with all the delivery obligations to which the plan had pledged them. The situation was all the more entangled because enterprises were usually provided with financial means allowing them to negotiate for volumes of purchases greater than were actually obtainable, taking into account the quantities of available products and the prices at which they had to be handed over.

To cope with the chaos which was developing in this way the supply of enterprises with raw materials, fuel, equipment, etc. was more and more concentrated within the administrative organs. These latter had to ensure a centralized sharing of the main products necessary for industry. Such a division could not really be 'guided' by the plans because the products necessary for the achievement of the latter existed only in insufficient quantity. The distribution was therefore subject

to orders of priority - by virtue of which certain enterprises were supplied before others.

Nevertheless the effective activity of production units themselves in a large measure an application of priority was actually carried out day by day. This had only a casual relationship with the quantitative targets of the plans. Thus the only real planning tool to be subordinated almost as a matter of course to the corrections and variations in the plans themselves tended to be replaced by the application by the administrative management of priorities.

The organizations which distributed the means of production in economic plans were only reference points among others. This was true even for relatively secondary priorities reference for the plans not being achievable - could not be used to share out the deficit products. Also administrative striving strove above all to respect the order of priority ordered by the political power and by the central planning organs. The *andulats* (agencies) of the Soviet economy which was involved in this way was very far removed from the idea of a planned economy. It hoped to reduce stress on the impact of the plan "targets" on real economic change.¹¹

At the time when the system of priorities was introduced in 1930 it aimed at first to ensure the best operation possible for 117 enterprises - called *shock enterprises* which were to set an example for the country. The priorities applied by the enterprises benefiting from the system concerned not only the supply of material but also the supply of labor force and the financial means.

In 1931 the system was extended to new enterprises, especially the metalurgical combine of Kuznetsk and Magnitogorsk, the tractor factories at Cheljabinsk and Kharkov, the car factories of Moscow and Kazan, Novosibirsk, etc.¹² The decision to grant priority to supplies for these factories meant that the factories, mines, and construction sites which were to supply them also had to be regarded as subjects for priority. In their turn the materials had to give priority to the transport necessary for the priority factories, and the Labor Commissariat had to provide them, before all others, with recruits and workers. As shortages became more general, so the list of priority enterprises became longer. It included in the course of 1933 not only

mining equipment, certain railroad enterprises and other enterprises, etc.⁴⁴

Very quickly the priorities thus established came into contact with each other and it was necessary on a daily basis to impose priorities for priorities, or, in other words. Thus at certain times the oil industry saw fuel supplies diverted to the automobile industry, and arrangements had to be made between the railroads and the oil

In these circumstances it was necessary to impose a daily process of priority in the form of decisions made on the spot at the moment and designed to overcome the case of insufficient supplies of one or another material or of another enterprise. According to the situation at the moment the priorities that were put in force benefited certain enterprises of heavy industry while it was another case of certain enterprises of light industry or even of housing.⁴⁵

The relationship which this system had with the plan is extremely vague. At most, for very long periods the opening of credits were within the limits of the plan, more exactly within the limits of the last version of the plan annual or quarterly. These limits were not very strict and therefore exercised little influence on the allocation of means of production of fixed capital and labour force. Even the proportions in which the different enterprises had to grow were not respected.

In fact the development of the priority system was a steady process. It was the result of a series of successive responses. When being not responsible in the government, it increased economic disorder and the country which had legalized the activity of non-priority enterprises. This process of perverting was reduced still more far it was controlled by a centralized administrative management operating day to day.

In spite of everything, such administrative manipulation was the merit of allowing today's Russian economy to develop and even if transport is judged to be most important, to reach success by the ever-extending shortages. In the absence of such devices the launching of plants on large parts in realized and in planned deficits of essential products would have led to

and a number of serious losses. Thanks to priority, complete catastrophes were averted, and some of the losses were able to be repaired, especially first of all during the war periods. Nevertheless, the priority system was a price to be paid for the most dramatic consequences of the contradiction between material goals and man's wishes. Over a long period, priority industries, which were not supported by the state, suffered excessive development and experienced a slowing down of their growth. Such was the case, notably, during the Third Five-Year Plan, with the machine-building and electrical engineering industries. Recourse to a system of priorities was obviously responsible for preventing the tendency toward a slowing down of economic growth due to excessive accumulation and overproduction, a tendency which threatened to drag along with it hence a collapse of the relationship between increased production and the corresponding accumulation funds. The collapse meant enormous wastage and substantial underutilization of the lands and accumulated funds.¹⁰

An important point also deserves to be mentioned, it appears from the available information that the adoption of priority in the priority system was far from allowing different industries to develop independently with the requirements of harmonious economic growth and with the necessity of rapid strengthening of the country's independence. The weight already acquired by the different industries, that of the persons who managed them, and the administrative status of the different industrial branches, often played a decisive role in determining the economic situation. The social and hierarchical relations established between the branches of industry, whatever the situation, took the form of a power, not that of a hierarchy of principles or of authority.

A typical example can be seen in the case of the machine-building industry. This was to occupy a central position in the plan because it produced machines for production. After a decline from the Fourteenth Party Congress (1920) on, priority was bestowed on the building of an independent machine-building industry. But this appeal had practically no result. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s the machine-building industry hardly supplied 2 per cent of the total production of the engineering and metal-working industry.

At the beginning of 1929, a measure was introduced which increased the administrative "weight" of this industry. It was promoted to the rank of an individual trust, following an intervention by Kaganovich.⁴⁸

In 1930 the "targets" of the plans of this industry were substantially increased, which reflected its change of status. However, the effective allocations of resources did not follow as the industry could not achieve its investment plan. As it turned out, priority was given to the more 'prestigious' industries, which had the advantage of a greater political weight (like the truck and tractor industries).⁴⁹

During the second five-year period, the machine-tool industry again saw its "status" improved (partly because of the increased demand for machine tools coming from industries using these machines). Nevertheless again the effective allocations of resources did not follow the forecasts of the plans and the utilizing industries had to develop their own machine-tool workshops. Such a practice did not always fit the treatment for the global industrial requirements and more particularly for the needs of the armament industry which required heavy and also precision machine-tools. It was only in the course of the Third Five-Year Plan that urgent measures were taken aimed at making up, partially, the accumulated lag of the industry. In fact these measures were not enacted when the war broke out: the ambitious plans adopted in September 1939 and December 1940 had only been partially achieved.⁵⁰

The preceding observations show how the anarchy in production and the development of the "priority system" brought consequences which were in contradiction not only with the 'forecasts' of the plans but also with the formally proclaimed priorities. The same phenomenon also resulted in serious political consequences. They increased even more the role of the central offices of state entrusted with 'managing the shortages' and taking repressive measures against those who did not observe the sharing out measures taken centrally. Consequently there was an extension of a state apparatus that was more and more hierarchical and swollen.

Notes

1. Thus between December 1927 and April 1928 the forecast coefficient of five-year growth for gross industrial gross from 1928 to 1932 increased to each version at about the same time the forecasts of gross investment in fixed capital to operate in five years were multiplied by four. See vol. 2 of this work p. 44.
2. R. Davies, *The Emergence of the Soviet Economic System* (KPSS documents and papers, NPN no. 9, University of Birmingham, 1971) gives a very instructive analysis of economic policy and Soviet planning p. 97-14.
3. Ideas of how the theme of disappearance of classes disappeared during War Communism may be found in the thesis of R. Tardieu, *Le Régime Temporaire* (L'Économie Théorique et l'Économie Réelle de la Russie 1917-1921) University of Paris, 1961. See also by the same author, *Les conceptions révolutionnaires de l'économie de la Russie de 1917 à 1921* a paper to the colloquium *L'économie russe* of January September 1960.
4. *Pravda*, February 4 1930.
5. *Pravda*, February 6 1930. After the war when these works were published this phase of Stalin would be altered and it would be a matter of exchanges organized by our commercial organizations. *Stalin's Speeches* Vol. XI p. 167.
6. See above Vol. XI p. 84.
7. *Bulletin mensuel de statistique de la S.N.U.* (monthly statistical bulletin of the League of Nations) and the *Monthly Review* of the Monetary Society Bank in London.
8. Thus between January 1 1933 and January 1 1934 monetary circulation rose from 84 to 113 billions rubles an increase of 34 percent. See S. Prigolovskii, *L'Économie soviétique* p. 390.
9. See the first three parts of this volume.
10. R. W. Davies emphasizes for example that the system of wage differentiation put into operation after June 1931 does not seem to have been established because the previous system has been proved to have raised the low wage productivity. He observes that it has also disappeared. The Soviet economic system was strongly influenced by the ideas of the dominant group in the Party (that is by the ideology of Davies, *The Emergence*, p. 23).
11. Some other examples will be given later in his section.
12. See for example, first and detailed account in P. Zolotarev, *Pravda* (first see also in *Soviet Review* June 4 1931 article by H. Foster. The overabundance of the Soviet Five Year Plan p. 237ff and M. Lewin, "The Disappearance of Planning in the Plan," pp. 2717. Also R. Davies and S. Winstanley in *Soviet Review* December 1973, "Further Thoughts on the First Soviet Five Year Plan," pp. 790ff.
13. *Soviet Works* Vol. 11, 832-9. This is the report, *The Results of the First Five Year Plan*, and has been published in several formats.
14. *Stalin Works*, Vol. 13, p. 182.
15. *KPSS* (1953), Vol. 2, p. 440.

30. See *Three years of the plan: economic development of the USSR 1928-1930* (Moscow, 1934).
31. KPSS (1953), pp. 741ff.
C. Bettelheim, *La Planification*, pp. 288-90.
32. See also *La Planification* and *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 386.
The second Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) was the first to be drawn up by A. Nove. *An Economic History*, p. 386 and 387.
33. As a young historian, he writes in what was said to be the essential work and source of the Second Five-Year Plan. According to him, the main task of the second Plan was to eliminate the differences between town and country and between physical and mental work. For more on the background, see *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 387 and 388. Moscow, 1958. In reality, these differences were accentuated in the second Plan's course. Certain measures taken between 1928 and 1932 largely contributed to this development.
34. KPSS (1953), pp. 879ff.
35. See *Three years of the plan: economic development of the USSR 1928-1930* (Moscow, 1934).
36. Figures calculated from sources of years 24 and 25; see also *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 387 and for more detailed figures. N. Jasov, *La planification*, p. 199.
37. See note 19 of the next chapter.
38. It should be pointed out that the plans did no better at controlling the spatial distribution of productive forces. Thus the regional distribution of investment and production had only a very distant resemblance to the targets set in the plans. During 1928-34, for example, the Soviet Union region experienced, in relative terms, a capital accumulation much higher than that forecast by the plans. See H. Hoyer, *Soviet Transport Engineering* (Washington, 1978), especially p. 342, and H. Chamberlain, *Aménagement*.
39. *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History* (Moscow, 1958), pp. 71-72.
40. *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 387. An alternative English translation appears in A. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 387. In the same question, it seems that this engineer was not punished, but the central authorities reported his criticisms as if he continued to put into operation the plan, which could not be carried out for the reasons given by the engineer. Consequently, enormous funds were thrown in construction sites that were paralyzed for long periods, and the production of oil was a long way from the figure "set" by the Plan.
41. *La planification*, by A. Nove, *An Economic History* (Moscow, 1958), p. 387, quoted by A. Kappeler, *An Introduction*, p. 129.
42. The first Plan provided that at its completion 6-8.5 million tons of oil would be produced. In 1932 only 920,000 tons were produced. See K. Medvedev, *La planification*, p. 120. Main source figures are on pp. 104-106 of this book.

- 40 Some figures illustrate the scale of the price rise mentioned between 1929 and 1940:

*Retail prices for products sold in Moscow
(roubles)*

	1929	1940
Rye bread, 1 kg.	0.08	1.00
Wheat bread 1 kg.	0.15	2.40
Potatoes, 1 kg.	0.06	0.80
Beef 1 kg (top quality)	0.45	14.00
Fresh milk, 1 litre	0.25	2.20
Refined sugar, 1 kg.	0.70	5.50
Cotton cloth 1 metre	0.40	4.10

(Source: Sovnarkom price committee quoted in *Economie et Politique*, November-December 1957 p. 85.)

- 41 For more than thirty years one of the characteristics of the Soviet economy has been the day-by-day administrative management of resources. This has not disappeared today but its role is substantially reduced from what it was in the 1930s. In fact, in present conditions the economic plans are less "ambitious" and more "realistic," and this allows a more limited place to be occupied by centralized direction of resources.
- 42 See the article by Reznik in *PR* No 1 1931 quoted by E. Zarecki *Planification* p. 169. Zarecki rightly points out that a priority system had already been established during War Communism.
- 43 See above p. 170.
- 44 Between February and June 1931 several decrees lengthened the list of priority enterprises. See *Iskrennye zakony* of this period.
- 45 See S. Chichonikidze *Statisticheskiye vyvody* 2 pp. 311 and 315. See also *Iskrennye zakony* No 12 1931 Art. 116 and E. Zarecki *Planification* p. 170.
- 46 *Doklady KPSS skvialatogo pravitel'stva* Vol 2 p. 308.
- 47 These last priorities came to the fore especially in 1932 and 1933 see Zarecki *Planification* p. 21.
- 48 An approximate idea of the size of these phenomena can be gained from the following figures: between 1928 and 1940 the "value in constant prices" of the fixed capital of industry was multiplied by 2.2 (N.A.A. 1950a p. 58) but the revised index of industrial production was far from being increased by the same proportion. It must be multiplied by a coefficient of from 3.3 to 4.3 according to estimates (Hodgman, *Soviet Industrial* p. 91). But in most other countries industrial production increased faster than the accumulated fixed industrial capital. In the U.S.A. for example between 1919-29 and 1929-48 industrial production (on average for each period) rose by 4.7 and 3.1 percent respectively whereas industry's fixed capital increased by 3 and 0.0 percent (see the article by A. Arzumanyan, "Present problems in the development of our industry" in *Pravda*, February 24 and 25 1964).

49. These facts, and those which follow, are from the thesis of J. Cooper, *The Development of the Soviet Machine Tool Industry 1917-1941* (University of Birmingham, 1975), especially pp. 429 ff.
50. See above p. 429.
51. See above p. 430. J. Cooper rightly remarks that the delay suffered by the machine tool industry toward the end of the Second Plan is partly explicable by its loss at this time of Kaganovich, very powerful in the Party leadership, who was transferred from its commissariat to the aircraft industry.

The economic crises of the 1930s

A major characteristic of the industrial development and more generally of the enlarged reproduction of the material conditions of production in the Soviet Union was its very irregular and jerky aspect. As we have just seen, in examining the "putting into operation" of the Five-Year Plans economic reality was very far removed from the harmonious development about which official ideology boasted.

In fact the Soviet economy experienced phases of rapid expansion and phases of near-total stagnation or even decline. These fluctuations affected particularly the rates of accumulation and revealed that the enlarged reproduction was effective in a cyclic manner and underwent crises.

I. The 1933 crises

The increase in the rate of accumulation, in terms of the relationship between gross investment and national income, was extremely rapid in 1931. According to an official statistic this rate then reached 36 percent of the national income against 27.3 percent in 1930. *This increase absorbed the total increase of national income.* The poverty and incoherence of the available statistical data for 1932 make it difficult to calculate the accumulation rate of this year. Nevertheless, it seems that in 1932 the rate again increased.

Although accumulation was directed towards industry, its increase was accompanied by a rapid fall in the growth rate of industrial production. This fall indicates that the material and social conditions were such that the necessary investment was less and less capable of maintaining the desired rhythm of growth of industrial production.

Not only the rate of increase was ever more marked in the production of industrial consumer goods, in reality taking account of the collapse of artisan production and village industry which occurred at the beginning of the 1930s there was a serious decline in the level of consumption of the masses.

The fall in growth rates of industrial production, the decrease in the availability of consumer goods in the first years of the 1930s, the repetitions of these phenomena in 1931 and 1932, and on the volume of the labor force that construction could have at its disposal, constituted the material bases for the crisis of 1933 and the decline in investment which was one of its manifestations.

Thus, whereas net investments in fixed capital estimated in constant prices of 1928 had rapidly increased between 1913 and 1932, these same investments diminished by approximately 12 percent in 1933.⁶

The same phenomenon of regression can be observed in the level of employment, whereas the latter had substantially increased between 1930 and 1932, it declined in 1933, namely, the decrease was 10.5 per cent, that is 1 percent of the total labor force was the least significant. Especially striking was the decrease in employment in the construction industry, in 1933 the number of workers employed fell by more than one and a half times, that is more than 11 percent between June 1932 and June 1933.

The crisis of 1933 had the essential feature of a crisis of over-accumulation, characterized by an exhaustion of investment which could be expended on its disposal by existing resources, notably resources of labor.

At first sight, the crisis of 1933 seems to have been due to the agricultural crisis which broke out at that time. However, looking at things more closely, it appears that the crisis was not fundamentally in the same attitude by the process of accumulation during the years 1929-32. The sharp rise in

accumulation was such that there resulted an exacerbation of the contradictions within the industrial sector and even more so between industry and agriculture. The latter thereby found itself deprived of essential resources. It was not capable of maintaining a level of production corresponding to the needs of industry or of continuing to provide it with the labor force required for the pursuit of an expansion corresponding to the volume of the investments made up to then in industry. In addition, the famine and drought which severely struck several rural regions between 1932 and 1934 reduced the productive capacity of agriculture.

On the other hand, the fall in the level of consumption in the towns badly affected labor productivity and reduced to a large part, and momentarily, the productive effects expected from industrial investment.

Up to a certain point, this situation was recognized at the beginning of 1933 when it was admitted that the decline in agricultural production and the migration towards the cities had reached such a scale that it was essential to momentarily restrain accumulation, and also to try to put a brake on industrial development. As *Izvestiya* wrote:

The towns have been extended too much. The fast supply of urban agglomerations, the supplying of new construction sites and providing big centers with the products that are necessary for them pose problems which are complicated and difficult to solve. The migrations of great masses of population seriously hinder the provisioning of the country, overpopulate the towns and provide an insoluble housing crisis.¹

These lines present in summary, and not without euphemism, some of the effects of overaccumulation in the preceding years. They illuminate the limits against which continuation of the process of accumulation collided.

II The economic recovery of 1934

During 1933 and 1934 there again developed incentives for an increased yield from capital and for an increased investment.

These conditions resulted, in particular, from the entry into production of equipment installed during previous years and which allowed greater production at a smaller real cost. Thanks to this equipment it was possible to liberate part of the labor force from its previous occupation and to transfer it to activities which were more 'profitable'. In addition there was an improvement in urban food supply as regards cereals (following an increase in procurements achieved in spite of a catastrophic harvest). This last improvement also allowed an increase in labor productivity.

On the whole, therefore, there was a better functioning of industry and a reduction of shortages which allowed rapid growth of investment.⁹

Increase of investment was due not only to the increase of labor productivity¹⁰ but also to the increase in the number of workers in industry.¹¹

These developments allowed an increase in the mass of surplus value and in accumulation and the stronger because real wages did not follow the advance in labor productivity.

The growth of labor productivity and employment was made possible by the continuation of a relative improvement in the supply of grain to the towns allowing a better recuperation of the labor forces. This improvement itself was based in 1935 on a recovery of agricultural production (which was beginning to benefit from mechanization) and on a reduction of grain exports.

During the period 1933-36, the increase of labor productivity was not solely due to the 'mechanical effect' of better food supplies. It was also based more and more on the putting into operation progressively of new equipment (domestic or imported). It also resulted from a progressive mastery of this equipment by workers and cadres. In the final analysis it resulted from a policy which put a strong accent on labor output.

However, the very size of the increase of accumulation in 1934-36 carried with it the possibilities of a new economic crisis.

In fact, because of the high rate of accumulation, the current limits on new increases in mechanization and industrial productivity were quickly reached. The continuation of the improvement in

labor productivity met a series of obstacles, in particular, was worker resistance. Consequently, industrial production and the size of the surplus grew more and more slowly. In 1937-38 a surplus production of capital situation had, in practice, reached. The circumstances were ripe for the crisis of 1937.

III. The 1937 crisis

The 1937 crisis differed from that of 1933 in several ways. Its main difference was its duration. In fact, whereas in 1933 the amount of gross investment (in constant prices) exceeded that of 1932-1937 was again characterized by a lower volume of investment, being 7.9 percent less than that of 1936-40. Moreover, in 1939 investment in construction and installation of equipment (valued investment in construction and installation) was lower by about 5 percent than that of 1936, whose level was not exceeded until 1940. There was accordingly an investment crisis of relatively long duration. Even in 1940 the construction percentage of the GNP was smaller than in 1937.¹⁰

This time agricultural difficulties did not explain the investment stagnation. In fact only the 1936 harvest was exceptionally bad, whereas the harvests of the following years were good and in 1937 even excellent.

Stagnation of investment was, basically, bound to the slow increase of production, employment¹¹ and industrial labor productivity.¹² This low increase hindered the continuation of a rapid increase of accumulation and showed that the consequences of the previous surplus production of capital had only very partially been overcome.¹³

The near stagnation of employment and of labor productivity in industry was not in accord with the massive investing in 1937-40 of the enormous fixed capital invested in industry in previous years. This contradiction was due to the fact that unilateral priority development of investment interded for the production of material elements of constant capital, had a bad effect on the improvement of the conditions of reproduction of labor forces and on a productivity increase. There were

important obstacles to the acceleration of industrial development during the years 1937-40. Such obstacles reveal the scale of the previous surplus accumulation of capital and the subordination of investment to the requirements of increases in Section 1 (which produced the means of production).

Surplus accumulation of capital produced counter-productive effects which even affected strategically-important industries like metallurgy and oil.¹⁹

Generally speaking, the pressure which was exercised to increase the intensity of labor and production norms led to deterioration in working conditions and lowered the quality of output.

Thus the surplus accumulation which characterized the years of expanding investment reduced the consumption of the workers and contributed to unbalanced production growth. Moreover, production increased in an irregular way at the same time as its quality fell. All this laid the ground for the 1937 crisis, which would be followed by a period of serious economic difficulties lasting up to the eve of the Nazi aggression.

Notes

1. See *Materialny po balance narodnogo khozyaystva SSSR* (Moscow, 1932), p. 54.
2. According to official figures, this rate fell from 22.2 percent in 1930 to 20.7 in 1931, 14.5 in 1932, and 5.2 percent in 1933 (see *NKh*, 1958g, p. 80). As has been seen, these statistics show an overvalued growth rate.
3. According to official statistics this rate was 9.3 percent in 1932 and 4.8 percent in 1933 (see above, p. 80). Comparison with the development of physical production shows, moreover, that the global growth rates are more substantially over-estimated for consumer goods than for industrial production as a whole.
4. The change was from 20.7 percent in 1931 and 16.2 percent in 1932 (see R. Moura and R. Power, *The Soviet Capital Stock 1928-1982* (Homewood, 1986), pp. 358-59).
5. See above.
6. *Trud v SSSR* (1936), pp. 10-11 and 244.
7. On this point see the first part of this book.
8. *Izvestiya*, February 2, 1993.
9. In 1924 gross investment in the state and cooperative sector rose from nearly 30 percent in current prices and 13 percent in constant 1924 prices.

- (see R. Macrostean and R. Powell *The Soviet Capital Stock* 1956. Investment growth continued up to 1938 (see above).
10. Between 1912 and 1937 the index of hourly labour productivity in industry grew by 66 percent, according to Hodgman's estimate (*Soviet Industrial* p. 117) and even by 80 percent on an official basis (see above) to official statistics which however do not adjust the index for production in the necessary deflation.
 11. Between 1912 and 1937 the number of industrial workers grew to one million (See J. Barber, *The Composition of the Soviet Working Class 1922-1941* SIPS No. 16 (C.R.E.S. University of Birmingham 1971).
 12. See above, Part 2 of this volume.
 13. Regarding the "revised" index of industrial production calculated by Hodgman, it can be seen that this production, having risen from 100 percent in 1915 and 100 in 1930, only grew by 7.8 percent in 1941 (figures calculated from Hodgman, *Soviet Industrial* p. 84).
 14. See N.Kh., 1956g, p. 172.
 15. On this point see the contribution of N. Kaplan "Capital Formation and Accumulation" in *Soviet Economic Growth* (ed. A. Bergson) 1956g, p. 41.
 16. Between 1936 and 1940 industrial employment only increased nominally about 3.8 percent (compared to 28 percent between 1917).
 17. See above, p. 117.
 18. The internal contradictions in the industrial sector are emphasized by the following figures. After 1937 total industrial production increased at only a relatively weak pace (contrasting with the situation after the 1920s crisis). Thus the "revised" index of total industrial production (including auxiliary production) shows an increase of 10 percent between 1937 and 1941 (plan figures) (see Hodgman, *Soviet Industrial* p. 83) that is less than 7 percent annually. And this evaluation seems too optimistic. In fact an index calculated from production in physical terms of 22 industrial products only a growth 15 percent between 1937 and 1941 (or annual growth of less than 1.5 percent).
 19. Between 1937 and 1940 steel production grew only by 1.1 percent and rolled steel by 1.1 percent (See N.Kh. 1956g p. 165). Production of pig-iron rose by only 2.8 percent. In these circumstances the development of the engineering and armaments industries could take place only at the expense of other output requiring metallurgical products. Petroleum output increased during these three years by only 8.8 percent.

Crisis of overaccumulation and domination of capital

The economic crises which have just been described were the result of an accumulation which was an end in itself and which did not aim at satisfying concrete needs for consumption and production. Such crises are capitalist crises: they are tied to the reproduction, specific circumstances of relationship of exploitation that take the basic form of the wage relationship.

In the circumstances of the Soviet economy in the 1930s the contradictions engendered by the class struggle in production and distribution gave rise to open crises of surplus accumulation of capital, taking the inverted shape of surplus production crises of Western capitalism: namely the shape of a shortage of goods which becomes a situation of general shortage.

The 1933 crisis is a very good illustration of the particular features of this type of crisis, because it was marked by extremely serious shortages which involved certain means of production, consumer goods, and particularly food items, above all grains; this latter shortage resulted in the famine of 1933. The famine was simultaneously the result of a policy and the manifestation of a crisis tied to surplus accumulation, which led to an excessive procurement of grain intended to be sold on a world market to pay for equipment. This same surplus accumulation led to a substantial drainage of labor from agriculture and to many other charges on the material resources of the countryside for the benefit of accumulation and industrialization.¹

From the concrete analysis of the crises of the 1930s, an attempt can be made at producing a general model of the Soviet economy. Under Stalin accumulation of accumulation benefited those sectors where the relationships were most developed and those in need of new equipment. That is new means of expansion developed to the point of preventing the expanded reproduction of agriculture, of reducing the production of the means of production for a period the state continued with its accumulation. The surplus accumulation of 1928-32 for a time made increased production of value impossible because it terminated the process of increase of employment and of labor productivity. The failure of the rate of accumulation that was supposed to permit accumulation process to continue on a larger scale was not a prohibition of the continuation of this process. The means that were set to work thus came into conflict with their own ends, this being a characteristic of surplus accumulation.

In 1933 the surplus production of capital had an absolute character (in the sense that Marx gave it) since it was at that time impossible to obtain a greater mass of value either by an immediate increase in the number of workers or by raising still more the exploitation rate of the already occupied in production. As has been seen, the shortages prevented the immediate continuation of the process of drawing away designated labor forces from the countryside and were an obstacle to a rapid growth of labor productivity. Consequently the process of industrialization was temporarily held back. The construction sites and factories could not receive sufficient workers, equipment and means of production. Delays in construction and operation were consequently substantially lengthened and part of capital resources accumulated was put to sleep. Circumstances were such that certain factories had to slow down their operations so that others, serving more directly the accumulation of new means of work, could continue to function.

Putting to sleep some of the factories and construction sites increased the shortages which were becoming enormous. It did this doubly when it retarded the mass supply of products

necessary to cover the needs of the latter. It did it indirectly with a multiplier effect by causing (by the prior rationing of production units) irregular operation of factories. Thus the shortages became general and an increasing share of investment was frozen while the velocity of social capital accumulation was slowed down. From 1934 the intensity of the crisis eased little by little. The crisis disappeared thanks to a progressive clearing of bottlenecks resulting from a re-allocation of labour forces. This allowed certain factories to increase production and certain construction works to be completed. The 1937 crisis developed basically in the same manner as the preceding crisis with the relative importance of shortages moving from agriculture to industry to such an extent that during more than three years (from 1937 to 1941) productive investment was below the level of 1936.

1. The specific nature of the "Soviet" economic crises of the 1930s

There can be no question within the framework of the present study of attempting to present a detailed analysis of capitalist crises and their various specific forms. On the other hand it is necessary to make several observations about the crises experienced by Western countries so as to better illuminate the capitalist character of the Soviet crises of the 1930s as well as their specific features.

At first it must be underlined that the economic crises of Western capitalism themselves took several different forms. For example, during the 16th century economic crises manifested themselves predominantly by falls in prices and only affected the volume of production to a small extent. On the other hand in the 18th century with the development of monopolies and of monopolies these characteristics were reversed: the main aspect of a crisis was the collapse of production, investment and employment while prices fell only slightly. Since World War Two may even rise substantially engendering the phenomenon known as *stagflation*.

Pointing out these particular features of the different economic crises of "Western" capitalism does not exhaust the subject of

their specific forms. In a way which here can only be suggestive a distinction should in fact be made between crises whose apparently decisive element is 'market saturation' for *certain* goods (and which therefore begin with an "overproduction" of these goods) paralyzing part of the productive structure and leading to a 'general overproduction' and crises whose apparently decisive element is the fall of profit rates which leads about a reduction of investment, the closing of a great number of factories, unemployment, "underconsumption" etc. In reality these two manifestations of the crisis are inseparable for the "tendency toward a lower profit rate" and the "tendency towards overproduction" are intimately linked. These crises mark the crash of normal conditions of reproduction, a temporary failure of regulation by the law of value.

More deeply, another distinction must be made between two types of crisis: on the one hand there are those from which it is possible to "emerge" while returning to the same regime of accumulation and the same mode of regulation as before the crisis - these are the *small crises* - on the other hand there are those from which it is not possible to emerge except by a change of the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation: these are the *great crises* - marked by especially acute manifestation of resistance to capital exportation by those subjected to it.⁴

Here we are interested only in the *small crises* which manifest themselves as crises of underconsumption - as also the Soviet crises of 1911 and 1917 were also *small crises*.⁵

During the phase which precedes and prepares the ground for such crises in Western capitalism those who direct the process of production and reproduction struggle to obtain the maximum value from the part of capital that they control and to accumulate as much as possible within the limits imposed on them by the global reproduction of the conditions of production. This tendency toward maximum accumulation is the form taken by the class struggle in production. It tends to bring an increasing subjection of living labor to dead labor and to lead to the expropriation of the workers whose knowledge is more and more incorporated into the automatic system of machines. In the short term the class struggle in production

is portrayed as "the requirement of accumulation" (Section 1), this latter according to Marx's formula only "confronts the apparent laws of capitalist laws which are imposed on the accumulation".

The struggle in which the agents of capital are engaged in this way has as a consequence at certain times an increase of accumulation and employment at a certain rate. The demand for labor power grows rapidly leading to a certain raising of nominal wages and of real wages. This contributes especially to increase the demand for consumer goods more rapidly than their supply increases and brings a rise of prices for these goods allowing capital operating in Section 2 to buy producer consumer goods to take a new step in accumulation. The necessity of surplus value is increased. The demand for Section 1 increases more rapidly. However, the working class ceases at last as a group to adapt to the new conditions created by a higher capital content which tends to reduce the average rate of profit and the rhythm at which the invested capital and employment increase. These tendencies make the waves of increase or less at the same time but in increasing the supply of consumer goods occurs thanks to their cumulative growth, a reversal in Section 2. In such conditions part of the consumer goods already on the market have more difficulty finding a taker. This is a sign of overproduction of goods. The fall in the rate of profit leads to a slackening about a fall in accumulation and thereby a fall in demand for means of production and hence a slackening of activity in Section 1 which produces the means of production. From this point the crisis spreads and takes the form of general overproduction.

Let us now see what happens in "Section" capital when the state intervenes and starts planning over a privileged position in these conditions. The class struggle in production is strengthened by the action of state departments which are as to bring about maximum accumulation and primary development of Section 1. This form of accumulation if the numerical growth of capital brings about deep changes in the process of the rate of accumulation out of crises. Here we shall look at just a few of the main features, those which are very important to our present study, namely those which are directly related to the crisis of the

Firstly, we note that during these years the periods of accumulation are marked by a rise of nominal wages but by a stagnation and sometimes even a lowering of real wages. In fact, in the absence of an increase in the supply of goods (an increase blocked by state intervention) the rise of employment and of nominal wages makes real prices rise substantially and this in spite of all the talk about price control. We also note that the measures taken concerning wages and prices are, on the other hand, sufficient to ensure that the goods made by production units in Section 2 are at a relative price. In these circumstances rises of real prices in Section 2 increase the financial resources available to Section 1 and increase the fiscal receipts of the budget. These increases in receipts then serve to increase investment in Section 1. This is an important difference (compared to Western capitalism) in the distribution of accumulation funds during the period of upward movement. This change has remarkable effects: the relative slowing down of accumulation of Section 2 puts a brake on an increase of production of goods from this sector. Consequently, there is not a tendency towards overproduction of consumer goods but on the contrary a tendency towards shortage of this kind of goods. This tendency is strongly manifested under the particular form it adopts in Soviet capitalism: the tendency of capital to accumulate for the sake of accumulation.

If the efficiency of a given form of capitalism is evaluated not according to the improvement it allows in the living conditions of workers (such an improvement not being the goal of capitalist accumulation) but according to its capacity to increase the rate of accumulation, it can be said that Soviet-type capitalism is more efficient than any other.

This efficiency moreover has nothing to do with planning (since the plans are far from being strictly followed; it results above all from a domination of accumulation of capital. This domination is achieved through a number of circumstances: in particular by a firm centralization of the allocation of capital by the state and by the parasitic character of the social forces that might attempt to limit the expansion of the accumulation process. This parasitic results from the new structure, pushed as far as possible to the Stalinist period of

forms of organization and expression which would allow these groups to intervene in a coherent way in the life of society.

The essential role played by the practice that has just been mentioned in the exacerbation of the process of accumulation is corroborated by the fact that even when the plans, for example, prepared several times after World War Two, a faster development of Sector 2 than Sector 1, in practice they were not observed. The growth in accumulation with accumulation in Sector 1, and it was only exceptionally that Sector 2 developed as fast as had been forecast by the plans. One can thus draw several conclusions from this: the process of development of accumulation and of Sector 2, in this way, is guaranteed by objective forces favouring accumulation, namely, capitalism itself, as presented as soon as the power of capital merges with the power of the state and the workers are deprived of the possibility of organizing themselves as an independent way to put up resistance to the tendency towards maximum accumulation.

Secondly, it will be noted that the specific forms of accumulation which characterize Soviet capitalism are connected with the fact that the priority given to accumulation in Sector 1 creates obstacles to the adoption by Sector 2 of technological advances which would allow that Sector to experience a rapid increase of absolute productivity. Hence there is an aggravation of the manpower shortage.

In the circumstances that have just been described, the period during a certain period of sustained accumulation inevitably brings in a combination of two shortages: that of consumer goods and that of means of production.

At an early moment the development of these shortages tends to exacerbate, and one can see this especially at the beginning of the century, the accumulation effort relative to the authorities, the planners and the administrative strive to overcome the shortages by investing even more. The supplementary investment effort only makes shortages worse, multiplies bottlenecks, paralyzes factories and construction sites. Thus in 1902, the movement toward extension of accumulation was held back, and this coincided with the beginning of a crisis. The slowdown of accumulation continued until part of the investment made previously came to maturity; at this point, the policy

into operation of more productive means of production, and thanks to those investments permitted the liberation of the labor force, the easing of shortages, and the resumption of the mass of surplus value obtained and invested.

Such are briefly some of the specific features of the economic crises which took place during the 1930s. In many cases these features are also found in the postwar period, but the social and political relationships that were established in the 1930s still remain fundamentally the same.

As a last remark on these questions it should be emphasized that the real specificity of 'Soviet' economic crises is that the linkage of the reproduction process rests on the absolute overproduction of capital, whose particularities we shall analyze shortly. As for the generalization of these laws, it results not only from overaccumulation but also from the control exercised on prices. In fact, thanks to this generalization of shortages does not provoke an open and global price increase that could reduce or wipe out the money wage, as it happens in the market. The particularities of Soviet crises were to be tied to a specific relation of overaccumulation and repression of wages.

One other feature must also be noted: state ownership of the planning permits the continuation of what Marx called 'bourgeois ownership' (even though in a formal sense this has been abolished). The ownership in fact has nothing to do with what is usually called 'private ownership of means of production' which is only legal or state ownership. Now bourgeois or capitalist ownership is constituted by the social relations which allow the exploitation of wage labor. Marx rightly condemned the juridical distortion usage of the category of ownership when he criticized the way in which Proudhon had recourse to this category. Thus he wrote:

Ownership constitutes firstly the superior category of M. Proudhon's system. In the real world the division of labor and all the other categories of M. Proudhon are social relationships, whose total forms what today is called ownership, outside these relationships bourgeois ownership is only a metaphysical cat-

and paradoxical has on. When Mr. Proudhon perceives its ownership as an independent relationship, he commits more than an error of method: he clearly proves that he has not grasped the chain which binds all the forms of bourgeois production., 10

State ownership leaves intact the wage relationship of exploitation and simply creates a specific form of capitalist ownership which develops thoroughly with state planning. This development creates conditions that permit the expansion of new forms of means of reproduction of capital.

From the end of the 1920s in the USSR, the conditions which generate an arising of economic crises due to relative overproduction of capital typical of Western capitalism were largely eliminated, which made possible and inevitable the arising of a rather form of crisis: the crisis of absolute overproduction of capital. This was characterized by the fact that after a certain period of rising, eventually the accumulation of the accumulation process no longer led to an increase in the mass of surplus value so much as to the very act of capitalist production, the putting to good use of vast amounts of capital was frustrated; this made it impossible to continue increasing accumulation.

In Book 3 of *Capital* Marx deals with this absolute overproduction. In its own terms, the crisis takes place when the increased capital produces only a mass of surplus value more or less equal to or even less than it was before its increase. To explain this hypothesis by referring to the case where capital increases in relation to the working population in such proportions that the absolute labor that the population provides cannot be abstracted, not can the relative times of work be exceeded. He then shows the principal effect of such absolute overproduction of capital.

In the circumstances of Western capitalism of the 19th century, the absolute form of overproduction of capital constitutes a limiting case, since economic crises burst forth well before the realization of this condition of appearance because, in particular, of the disproportions which appear in the different productions, and/or of the chain effect of the decrease in profits which strikes certain enterprises. Later other elements help to

ensure that "Western" capitalism does not experience crises due to absolute overproduction of capital, in fact the industrialized capitalist countries have recourse more and more to the export of capital to countries where capitalism is less developed or they import manpower from these same countries.

In the Soviet Union in the 1930s the limiting case of absolute overproduction of capital became the "normal form" of the crisis, which explains why it manifested itself by a generalization of shortages because accumulation was pushed to extremes, as already seen, to the detriment and the disregard of the satisfaction of consumer needs.

This type of crisis, which pushes to extremes the tendency toward accumulation for the sake of accumulation, carries to the very limit one of the features of capitalism: the domination of exchange-value over use-value.

Thus there manifests itself in Soviet capitalism an "indifference to use value" which tends to spread to the whole economy, with the exception of the military sector and sectors tied to the military sector (for there the survival of the authorities is involved).

Indifference to use value is in some way incorporated in plan indices, insofar as the latter give prime importance to the "gross" value of production—that is, to the quantity of money which this production is held to represent. The race for quantity therefore becomes basic.

II. The substitution of the apparent domination of the plan for the apparent domination of competition

Examination of Soviet economic crises illuminates the circumstance that neither state intervention through the plan nor the extension of state ownership, nor the claimed 'new class content' of the authorities after they had been taken over by the Bolshevik Party "abolished" the laws of capitalist movement which result from the dominant role played by the wage relationship of exploitation and the forms of class struggle that are engendered by the reproduction of that relationship.

ness laws were still those of capitalism. However, the way in which they manifested themselves was transformed. It only to be explained as affecting the 'form' of competition.¹

Again, the pervasiveness of the competition which has been based the nature of its form, it is necessary to put aside superficial concepts that lead to a purely negative definition of competition, viewing it the equivalent of a condition of 'absolute absence of monopoly, absence of regulation, absence of state intervention, etc. The negative definitions must therefore be replaced by a positive definition,² which shows that competition is a 'product of a struggle between the different fragments of social capital.'

Several points must be emphasized here:

(1) The struggle relationship between the different fragments of social capital is inherent in the very existence of this latter which always takes the form of separated capitals. This separation of the different fragments of capital necessarily stems from the wage relationship, from the *fordista*³ separation of the direct producers from their means of production. The latter entails the separation of the different processes of production through which operates the reproduction of social capital, which therefore takes the form of the reproduction of multiple conflicting capitals. In the Soviet economy, the separation of the different processes of production and of the different fragments of social capital manifests itself by the multiplicity of enterprises which in no way constitute a 'unique state trust' as was imagined at first by various Soviet theoreticians, including Bukharin. The necessary separation of the different fragments of social capital had the consequence that despite state ownership and planning there exists commodity production, and accordingly the contradictions and the class struggle inseparable from this form of production.

(2) The struggle between different fragments of social capital was essentially a struggle for the appropriation and accumulation of the largest possible fraction of surplus value. In the Soviet economy this shows itself especially by the demand for investment credit and a large sum of means of production which incessantly emanate from the various Soviet enterprises and trusts. The accumulation of these demands constantly confuses the plans and contributes to the inflation of their targets.⁴

(3) The struggle between the different fragments of capital (competition) therefore is none other than what Marx called 'the relationship that capital maintains with as much as with other capital.'¹⁶

(4) In abstract terms, competition is nothing but a real contest of capital which looks like an external one. It is the totality of this external relationship which can be modified by the action of changes affecting the concrete relations between the different fragments of capital. These modifications give rise to different faces of competition: free competition, state intervention, economic plan, etc. The rise of the latter gives birth to a series of ill-schemes which are such as to

Thus the predominance of the form of the plan is not itself an ill in of a possible control over the economy and leads only to a new fetishism. That of the plan which has been added to the fetishism of the state and the fetishism of money. These fetishisms help to have the concrete requirements of production and feed the myth of the omnipotence of the plan carried out by a state which centralizes and distributes the monetary means of accumulation.

The different faces that competition takes are therefore the result of a historic process: the history of the development of productive forces and of class struggle.

In the Soviet Union, from the end of the 1920s, competition took mainly the form of planning. This form, however, appeared under the joint action of a series of elements of which the most crucial was the massive development of primitive accumulation through centralized following class struggles which led to a certain form of state ownership and of the concentration of ideological images (themselves tied to the form of competition) between capital and the working class which put forward state ownership and planning as the solution of capitalism.

In these circumstances the predominance of state ownership and planning complete the domination of capital because they tend to eliminate what Marx called 'the equal or extraneous obstacles restricting the freedom (of capital) to move between different branches of production'.¹⁷ Thus the constant accumulation, the immanent law of capital, acts mainly through the plan which pushes forward mass industrial accumulation and the priority development of sector I.

The principal nature of the forms of state planning is determined by the conditions in which it operates. The principal contradiction is the rate of surplus value and the distribution of the social product. It is to solve the conflicts between the different fractions of the working class. Because of this particular contradiction, the state is represented abstractedly (in the sense of *Marx's Capital*) as a *bourgeoisie* in the guise of its imaginary representative of social labour.

The appearance of the state of social capitalism is the result of the abolition of anarchy in as much as it is an attempt to solve the contradiction bearing specific contradictions to the existence of the state can ensure a national distribution of the labour power, means of production and a regular growth of production and consumption in market conformity. It is to be noted that the real movement which is that of the capitalist forces of production in capitalist production. Here also the movement of the objective conditions of price and wage fixing and the efforts to reduce these social relations pertaining to the law of value are organized as instruments by manipulating and manipulating and so on. Soviet power only makes the contradictions more acute and exacerbates the contradictions more and more.

To finish with these remarks, it should be noted that since the development of state planning is a task for the state at the end of the 1920s strong helped the leadership of money but dominated those at the top of the state apparatus. The monetary illusion has impeded the Party leadership to pay attention only to the forms of money which were to be used, taking no account of material shortages. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s money fetishism led to a serious deterioration of the fact that material resources were insufficient for concrete needs. Such an appearance is explained by a real faith in the power of money. As Bukharin said the Party leadership was thus encouraged to believe that if we had money, we would also have everything else.

Also to be noted are the extraordinary illusions which were born at the same time from the combination of money fetishism, state fetishism and plan fetishism. It was this combination which led the Soviet economist Stumolin to declare:

We are not bound by any objective law. The question of rhythm is decided by the will of human beings.

It was again this combination of fetishism which led the Soviet economist, Voznesenski, to claim:

We are introducing enormous changes in all aspects of human life and in a revolutionary way we shall penetrate the forces of nature.¹

This is the enchanted world which also gave birth to the idea of a curve of economic growth moving upwards and accelerating, with Stalin talking about "rising Bolshevik curves" as opposed to "falling Trotskyist curves."²

The economic crises reveal the illusory character of all these declarations. However, they are not enough to cause the disappearance of the fetishisms of money, state and plan, for the latter are the product of dominant economic, social and political relationships.

Notes

- 1 Thus the Soviet industrialization of the 1930s brought to the peasants of the USSR dramatic consequences analogous to those that a British industrialization in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought to Irish and Indian peasants who were also condemned by the million to famine.
- 2 The term "western capitalism" conventionally designates the various forms of capitalism characterized by the predominance of legal private ownership of the means of production and relatively limited state interference with the process of accumulation, the distribution of investment and the fixing of prices and wages.
- 3 See A. Lipietz, 'Le double complexe et de la crise' in *Les Temps modernes* (June 1980), pp. 2212ff, especially 2224.
- 4 On these various points see above, pp. 2222-2226 and, by the same author, *Crise et inflation, pourquoi?* (Paris, 1979). Also see the Introduction by this author to the CEPREMAF text on 'Le redéploiement', (pp. 6-8).
- 5 The crisis that the Soviet economy is presently experiencing is, on the contrary, a "great crisis" marked by a long-term decrease of the production growth rate. This crisis indicates the growing inadequacy of the regime of accumulation and of the method of control to the requirements of an increase of general labor productivity.
- 6 K. Marx, 'Principles for a critique of political economy' in *Oeuvres-Economiques*, Vol. 2, (Paris, 1968), pp. 294-95.

14. In a strict sense competition thus defined positively is firstly that of capital but the latter necessarily engenders particular forms of competition or combines with forms of competition inherent in simple market relationships. Thus it is possible to distinguish competition between producers between buyers between workers between lenders tenants landlords proprietors etc. In the present text it is not possible to analyze these different forms of competition which in any case are themselves dominated by the competition of capital. In S. Kuznets ed. *Marx Lexikon zur Politischen Ökonomie* Vol. 1 (Konkurrenz) Berlin 1967 may be found a collection of different texts by Marx and Engels concerning competition and its different forms.
15. The struggle that different enterprises have to put up for investment allocations still characterizes Soviet planning. They also characterize countries that have the same kind of planning. Thus C. Botros, writes that the Polish plan of the 1970s was 'the result of a permanent struggle of the different lobbies for credits with no consideration for overall production' (*Le Nouvel Observateur* July 11 1981 p. 41).
16. See K. Marx Principles for a critique (above note 6) p. 294. In the same text a little earlier Marx writes 'By definition competition is only the interior nature of capital its essential resolution manifesting itself and being realized as the interaction between numerous capitals as an external tendency of an internal necessity (capital not existing not able to enter except as a plurality of capitals it is in their interaction that its own movement appears)' (see above p. 264 also see K. Marx *Grundrisse*, Vol. 2, p. 157).
17. Marx deals with this topic in *Le chapitre inédit du Capital* Paris 1971 p. 160.
18. B. Chevarria has analyzed relevantly and carefully the different ideological forms assumed by this imaginary abolition of capital in his book *Le capital socialiste* (Paris, 1960).
19. N. Bukharin *et al.* *La Question paysanne en URSS* Paris 1973 p. 203.
20. Quoted in Vol. 2, of this work p. 389.
21. *FA* No. 1 1930 pp. 21ff quoted by E. Zolovsk *Planification* 69 Note 1 (italics are by C.B.).
22. *Stalin Works* Vol. III pp. 759-60 (Report in Sixteenth Party Congress June 27, 1930).

Conclusion

A capitalism of a new type

IF one wanted to summarize as briefly as possible certain of the conclusions that result from the preceding pages, one might say that during the 1930s the Soviet Union experienced radical economic and social changes whose essential consequences are as follows: The crushing of the peasants, whose means of production were expropriated, and their transformation into kolkhozniks or state farmworkers, when they were not obliged to exile themselves to the towns or were not deported; expropriation of the artisans, of small trade and small industry for the benefit of the state sector; the destruction of what was left of the independence (already very restricted in the 1920s) of the workers' trade-union organizations and the transformation of the latter into mere appendices of enterprise managements; the subjection of wage-earners to a factory despotism of an extreme brutality; the putting into practice of "labor legislation" which in reality was penal legislation; the development of mass repression enabling the imposition of penal and concentration camp labor on a large scale; state centralization of capital and efforts to subordinate the accumulation of the latter and economic growth to a state plan.

The process of social and economic transformation of the 1930s did not in any way eliminate capitalist social relationships; on the contrary it reinforced them. It increasingly made the wage relationship into a relationship of fundamental exploitation.

By favoring the extension and deepening of capitalist social relationships, the process of transformation which marks the 1930s in the USSR pushed to extremes the contradictions of capital and led to crises of absolute overaccumulation which manifested themselves through general shortages.

The process which has just been summarized permitted rapid growth of some industries, which helped to alter the place of the Soviet Union in international economic and political relationships. At the same time this process increased the internal economic imbalances in the Soviet Union and the inequalities of its development; it turned agriculture into a sector that was structurally weak but from which the state could extract a relatively high surplus product. It permitted an increase of labor productivity, although the advance of the latter did not correspond with the intensification of work and the scale of material accumulation, and there was a deterioration of the quality of production.

The growing place occupied by the wage relationship of exploitation and by the capitalist division of labor, and the shape of the movement of economic contradictions (which governed the cyclic nature of growth and crises) throw light on the nature of the social and economic system which developed during the 1930s. It was a capitalism that had eliminated, more than any other, the precapitalist forms of production and which tended to subject to an exceptional degree the totality of workers to the requirements of accumulation for accumulation. These features of "Soviet" capitalism, and the preeminent role allotted to the state and the Party, make it a *capitalism of a new type*.

This latter was germinating in the October Revolution, with its concept of a socialism for which state capitalism would be the immediate antechamber. In this sense, if a revolutionary character is recognized in the economic and social transformations of the 1930s, it can be said that they completed the capitalist work of the October Revolution, whilst that completion had been checked up to then by the peasant revolution and by the relative egalitarianism that had been imposed by the ambiguous relationships that the Bolshevik Party maintained with the working class between October and the end of the 1920s.

It seems to me that by talking of a capitalism of a new type one is describing much better the fundamental social relationships of the Soviet economic and social system, better than by talking of bureaucratic collectivism, or of the state mode of production or of state socialism. However, the use of this term obviously cannot suffice, for it does not allow certain characteristics of "Soviet" capitalism to be grasped, and it leaves others in the shadows; first among these others is political totalitarianism. To show up this latter it is necessary to establish an explicit relationship between the capitalism of new type born in the USSR and the political conditions of class domination which made possible its emergence. These are the problems which must be tackled in Volume 4 of the present work.

Bibliography

AN index and a general bibliography for the period, including just the essential titles, references, and sources, will be provided in the next volume, *The Dominators*, which will also be devoted to the third period 1930-41. This will be the final volume of *Class Struggles in the USSR*.